



# NOW & THEN

West Central Women's Resource Centre  
Annual Report 2018/2019



# THEN & NOW AT WCWRC

## A Message from the Executive Director & Board Chair

Looking back 10 years really puts things into perspective! In 2009 we had 9 staff members and now have a team of 27. We were open three days a week back then and thanks to the generous support of the United Way's For Every Family Initiative, we are now open 6 days per week. That year we also introduced our Neighbourhood Settlement Program, which now supports over 300 newcomers a year.

Since 2009, we have seen our housing work expand to include a Housing First Program, a program for women exiting corrections, and tons of advocacy work. We launched our incredibly successful mentorship program WE WIL (Women Empowering Women Into Leadership) and Red Road to Healing, a violence recovery program based on traditional Indigenous teachings. Our Childminding program grew into a full fledge social enterprise and last year we developed Healing Together, which offers newcomer women group and one-on-one counselling.

Over the years, our community has grown and a combination of increased and more diverse needs of the women we walk with and an ever-changing non-profit landscape has required us to be well-connected and responsive to our environment.

On behalf of all the staff at the Centre, I want to express our gratitude to our board who provide ongoing guidance to the organization and to the funders and donors, whose generosity makes our work possible. And to the incredibly dedicated, compassionate and hard-working team that I work alongside every day, thank you will never be enough. I look forward to what the next 10 years will bring.

**Lorie English**  
*Executive Director*

This year's annual report will take you on a journey over the last 10 years. 2009 was the year we bought our current building. The Board Chair at the time and one of this year's Women of Distinction Heidi Wurmman expressed her hopes for moving out of the basement of John Howard and into the new building: "We are excited about our future potential growth as an organization because this means that we will be better able to provide services to women in our community." And indeed we have. We hope you will enjoy reading about all of the incredible programming that has happened over the years at 640 Ellice Ave.

The Board has always been proud to guide this journey by working closely with the Executive Directors and staff. I'd like to thank all current and past board members for their hard work and dedication to this Centre. Together, we have developed a well-respected organization that has been delivering crucial support in our community and is a voice for women's issues locally, provincially and nationally.

I'd also like to thank all current and past staff, mentors and volunteers who turned an old furniture store into a thriving and safe community hub. Thank you also to all our generous donors - your support is so important and changes lives.

**Meredith Mitchell**  
*Board Chair*



# 2019/2020 WCWRC STAFF & BOARD

## Staff

Lorie English  
Rachel Bergen  
Denise MacDonald  
Jennifer Buhr  
Merrill Grant  
Taylor Byrnes  
Candace Abdilla  
Kelsey Dandenault  
Sonia Cashman  
Victoria Malloy

Katherine Turner  
Megan Carrothers  
Furaha Laetitia Kalimba  
Helena Kelly  
Dinah Krause  
Lisa Spring  
Laura Canfield  
Jolene Wilson  
Kirsten Bernas  
Emilie Derkson-Poirier

May Henderson  
Sharon James  
Katelyn Scammell  
Gloria Knott  
Samantha Lee  
Andrea Kirkwood  
Dale Pike  
Isabel Jerez  
Diana Jarzab-Perchak  
Erika Frey

Molly Dunbar  
Halima Jelloul  
Karina Flores  
Mihret Zewude  
Wendy Kissick  
Erica Charron  
Eden Friesen  
Melissa McGregor

## Board of Directors

Meredith Mitchell  
Kerri Irvin-Ross  
Kerry Fraser

Suzanne MacPherson  
Cate Friesen  
Heather Mitchell

Shannon Kraichy  
Amy Wang  
Jolene Bergen

Gloria Koop  
Michelle Johnson

## Childminders

Maryan Abdile  
Amino Ali  
Halima Abdi  
Madina Ganaso  
Surriya Miraj  
Kowsar Abdulahi

Jehona Ajvazi  
Hibo Ali  
Cynthia Berens  
Nighisti Berhe  
Chantel Bruce  
Kamala Dhakal

Senait Gebrehanes  
Mulu Gebru  
Betlehem Gulta  
Lul Hussein  
Isabella Ikem  
Kahindisa Kobwa

Sultana Mahmood  
Cynthia Meekis  
Sarinrat Meeyan  
Amani Obied  
Jane Reyes  
Firehiwot Sido

## Mentors

Janice Bearbull  
Faith Fontaine  
Furaha Laetitia Kalimba  
Nikki Giesbrecht  
Shakila Issa

Haidee Maderal  
Maria Mairongo  
Victoria Malloy  
Alex McKane  
Veronica Meekis

Jasmond Murdock  
Joanne Nimik  
Megan Mitchell  
Jennifer Strand  
Whitney Sylvester



2009 WCWRC Staff



2019 WCWRC Staff



# STAFF & VOLUNTEER PROFILES

## Rachel Bergen

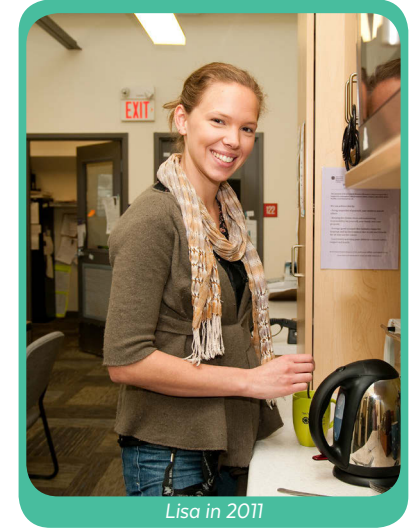
Rachel joined the staff team in 2011 and prior to that served on the Board of Directors of the agency. Rachel started out as our Administrative Coordinator, taking care of the building, working with the board, funders and donors and supporting the work of the Executive Director. In 2015, she added bookkeeper to her task list. Her knowledge and skills quickly grew and she is now our Director of Finance. Rachel continues to push and challenge herself, always ready to learn and take on new tasks. Her level of organization and coordination keeps the management team sane! As a resident of the West End community, Rachel has often said that working behind the scenes at WCWRC allows her to contribute her gifts to the work of the centre as a way to strengthen the community and role model her values for her two young daughters. Rachel's extraordinary crafting abilities amaze the staff on the regular and her incredible sense of humour has us in stitches every day.



Rachel in 2011

## Lisa Spring

Lisa joined us in 2011 as our Parent Mentor Coordinator. The Parent Mentor program was a pilot designed to work with mothers and caregivers who were involved with Child and Family Services. The program provided a group parenting program called Our Mother's Standing Strong Together, as well as one-to-one supports for caregivers. From there she moved into our housing program as the Director of Housing and was instrumental in creating our Housing First Program, More Than Four Walls. Acting now as our Director of Community Engagement, she is guiding the development of Connecting the Circle: A Gender-Based Strategy to End Homelessness in Winnipeg. Lisa's compassion and love for community shines through everything she does. She is a compass, guiding many staff on our team. She models our commitment to mentorship, having walked alongside both staff and participants as they grow. She is quick with a smile and has a contagious laugh that is heard often around the Centre.



Lisa in 2011



## Diane “Lady Di” Plante

Diane Plante had a difficult, violent upbringing and believed one should be ashamed of being Indigenous. She ended up homeless on the streets of Vancouver and involved with substance use to numb the pain. She made her way to Winnipeg in 1999 and eventually got help with a job, housing and education. She also got help to stop drinking: “I realized instead of dying it was time to get livin’.” Addictions Foundations Manitoba referred her to WCWRC and she met Lisa Spring. Lisa helped her find a home and “never gave up on me.” Things really started to turn around when Diane started volunteering as a cook in our kitchen and participated in many of our other programs: “I started getting involved in community and recognized my leadership... I realized I could support others.” She now volunteers as drop-in and housekeeping support and is on the First Voice Advisory Committee for Connecting the Circle: A Gender-Based Strategy to End Homelessness. “If it had not been for this Centre, I don’t know where I’d be... [Coming to the Centre] helps me to believe in myself when I really believed that nobody in this world did.”



*Lady Di, cooking for her community in 2011*



# PROGRAMS & SERVICES

## 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

## 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

## Newcomer Programs

- Settlement Services
- Healing Together: Group and One-To-One Counselling to support Women who have experienced Gender Based Violence.
- Conversation Circles
- Sewing Program
- Information and Orientation Workshops for Newcomers.
- Partnership with Rainbow Resource Centre to provide support to LGBT2SQ+ newcomers

## Employment & Education

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

## Policy & Research

- Connecting the Circle: A Gender-Based Strategy to End Homelessness in Winnipeg
- Project Manitouwabi Pilot Project
- Public Policy Advocacy Groups
- Contributing to policy reports and responses

## Community Building

- Celebrations & Events
- Community Meetings



# OUR 2019 PROGRAM STATS

## DROP IN CENTRE

24,524

Visits to our Drop In



27,468

Meals & Snacks Served

1,130

Loads of Laundry



## MENTORSHIP & VOLUNTEERING

16



WEWIL Graduates

81%

Positive Outcomes

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

27

Volunteers



15

Mentors

4

Practicum Students

## NEWCOMER IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT WORKERS (NISW)



338

Individual participants and their families supported by NISW with

124 home visits,  
accompanied participants to  
over 64 offsite visits.



NISW supported

20

Newcomer Women

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

## HOUSING



194

HOMES Program  
Participants

36



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.

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

HOMES & More than Four Walls Programs housed and/or rehoused participants from unstable or unsafe housing to more secure housing.  
**54**



# HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS WORK AT WCWRC

**West Central Women’s Resource Centre** started in 1999 as a 3-year project (Women’s Empowerment Project) in response to the high number of women in our neighbourhood living in poverty. A collection of service agencies and community women came together to determine what women in the West Central community needed. The highest needs identified through community planning processes were housing and income, and the Project set out to empower women to have the information and tools they needed to advocate for themselves and secure stable income and safe, affordable housing.

In 2001, when we became West Central Women’s Resource Centre, we launched HOMES (Housing Options, Mentorship & Economic Security) which included a mentorship component. Over the next almost two decades, we were able to mature and expand our mentorship and housing programs to further meet the needs of our community.

“Over the next 18 years, we were able to mature and expand our mentorship and housing programs to further meet the needs of our community.”

## HOMES

Our HOMES Program supports close to 200 women every year with housing and income by building positive partnerships between them and service providers. HOMES provides information, support and encouragement to navigate housing and income systems, and helps women advocate for themselves where possible. This model is also used in our settlement program.

Since the start, HOMES has incorporated mentorship and training to help women gain confidence and work experience. Our 10-week Women’s Empowerment Groups trained women in conflict resolution, building healthy relationships, and self-esteem. Those who completed the program could apply to be a HOMES mentor to receive valuable work experience, knowledge of the housing and income systems, and an honourarium,



*WCWRC staff working in our housing department and Connecting the Circle.*

while supporting other women.

## MORE THAN 4 WALLS

In 2015, we launched our second housing program, More Than Four Walls (MT4W), which uses the Housing First model to reduce chronic and episodic homelessness among women and transgender people. Last year, it was named an “exemplar of a program” by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness.

Housing First looks at housing as a basic human right. The goal is to first move individuals





experiencing homelessness into housing and offer wrap-around supports. Evidence shows that people cannot focus on getting well until the stress of homelessness or unstable housing has been removed. Our two Housing First Outreach Staff work with up to 36 women experiencing homelessness to find and maintain suitable housing, and increase self-sufficiency.

MT4W is one of 9 Housing First programs across Winnipeg, funded through the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

## PROJECT MANITOUWABI

The goal of the pilot is to eliminate a common pathway to homelessness - folks exiting corrections can rarely secure housing prior to their release. Housing Support Staff work with them in advance of their scheduled release to view units and arrange appointments with Employment and Income Assistance so that people can be quickly housed and do not need to access homeless shelters. Participants then receive support for up to a year to reintegrate into their community and to connect to other supports and services.

Housing Support Case Outreach Staff work to prevent homelessness for those who are hardest

to house when exiting a correctional facility and work with agencies such as Employment and Income Assistance and community organizations to ensure participants have a secure income and housing in place prior to their release from custody. Participants of the Project are supported for up to one year after their release.

## SYSTEM CHANGE

West Central Women's Resource Centre has always advocated for changes across systems to break down barriers to women accessing safe, affordable housing for them and their families.

We are an active member of Right to Housing, a local coalition of 58 organizations working to address the current housing crisis and the chronic need for social housing. Through this coalition, we promote and lobby for safe, quality social housing and housing policy solutions on a local, provincial and national level as part of a comprehensive strategy to eliminate poverty. We are also members of the Winnipeg Rental Network, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Women's Homelessness Advisory Committee and the Pan-Canadian Voice on Women's Housing.

In 2016, we successfully applied for Women

and Gender Equality Canada funding to lead Connecting the Circle: A Gender-Based Strategy to End Homelessness in Winnipeg. Women, trans, two-spirit and gender non-conforming individuals experience unique paths to homelessness. The Strategy is the first-of-its-kind in Manitoba and is rooted in lived experience. It will include targets and timelines for closing gendered systemic gaps and be implemented alongside Winnipeg's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.

“[WCWRC] has always advocated for changes across systems to break down barriers to women accessing safe, affordable housing.”

## THANK YOU

We'd like to thank all the staff, mentors, volunteers, funders, and our generous donors for making all of this possible. Thanks to you, we can support women in finding safe, appropriate, and affordable housing.



# NOW AND THEN: A DECADE OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Ten years ago, West Central Women's Resource Centre had nine staff and a budget of \$393,000. Today, we have 27 staff and our budget is over \$1,500,000! But in all this time, our mission has remained the same: to empower women. We have expanded and deepened programs to reach further and allow more women and their families to move from where they are to where they want to be.

Our oldest program is our **HOMES** (Housing Options, Mentorship & Economic Security) program. It's been around since we've been around! It was the first program to introduce a mentorship model and since then, mentorship has become

one of the key pillars in every program we run. In 2014, we participated in a national project to create a women's empowerment training framework, alongside partners in Toronto, ON and Saint John, NB. That framework was federally recognized as a best practice in women's empowerment and the program has been shared nationally. From that we created a stand-alone skill and capacity-building leadership and empowerment program called **WE WIL** (Women Empowering Women into Leadership). Participants who successfully complete the program are eligible to apply for a mentorship position in any program within our Centre, to gain work experience, ongoing training opportunities,

wrap-around supports and a monthly honorarium.

We built on the success of our childminding program by launching a **social enterprise** where our childminding services are now not only available in our centre but can be hired to go to events across the city to increase accessibility for parents. Our training program, **Taking Root**, equips women with the skills needed to work as childminders as well as the soft skills that are required to be successful in the workforce. This year, with the support of United Way Winnipeg, the For Every Family Initiative and Red River College, we embedded the Abecedarian Approach into our training to increase the language

## THEN: WCWRC 2009

9 staff  
10,359 Drop-In Visits  
3,453 meals and snacks served



development and literacy components of our services. Every year, **Happy Sprouts Childminding Service** offers part-time employment opportunities to 15-25 childminder and provides childminding for over 20 hiring agencies. We have also completed a business plan to move this social enterprise into becoming a fully licensed daycare centre and more work will be done on this in the coming years.

In 2010, **Red Road to Healing**, a violence recovery program based on traditional Indigenous teachings was developed at the centre and was later federally recognized as a best practice in violence prevention. Since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission report, we now hold Reconciliation Month every July and this year we released our first report on how we've lived up to our commitments to the Calls to Action throughout 2018/2019. These Calls to Action are being embedded in all aspects of our work.

Our gender based violence programming recently expanded to include **Healing Together**, launched in the fall of 2018. Healing Together offers newcomer women a Women's Wellness Group and one-to-one counselling, as well as youth groups on healthy relationships in various Winnipeg neighbourhoods. The program was built through

extensive consultation with diverse women with lived expertise as well as a committee made up of organizations serving ethno-cultural communities.

These achievements would not have been possible without the hard work, dedication, and passion of so many board members, staff, mentors, volunteers, participants, funders, and donors. Today we are a recognized and respected organization both provincially and nationally because of all of you. Thank you so much and we look forward to another decade or working together!

## NOW: WCWRC 2019

27 staff

24,524 Drop-In Visits

27,468 meals and snacks served



# West Central Women's Resource Centre



## WCWRC WOMEN OF DISTINCTION

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.

The three women we are honouring this year are an important part of who we were then and who we are now. 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!*



*Heidi Wurmman*  
*Former Board Chair*

Heidi was the WCWRC Board Chair from 2007 to 2010 and was key in the purchase of our building at 640 Ellice Ave, obtaining charitable status, and the expansion and introduction of many of the programs described in the report. Her leadership was instrumental to the Centre growing from a crowded space in the basement of the John Howard Society to the beautiful building where we now reside. A resident of the West End, Heidi has shown such dedication to growing and empowering women and to building an inclusive and sustainable community for everyone.





**Fiona Muldrew**  
*Former Staff Member*

Fiona was staff at WCWRC from 2008 until 2014. As the Childminding Coordinator, Fiona was the visionary behind our Childminding Program, which was designed to serve two distinct purposes. First, it was critical in removing barriers for women to access programs and support to know that they had a safe place for their children. Second, the program worked with women who had barriers to employment to gain experience in a supportive work environment. Fiona brought a warm and generous spirit to her work, always ensuring everyone felt included and never shied away from a bit of fun or a good laugh. Her commitment to education and strengthening families continues to inspire our work.

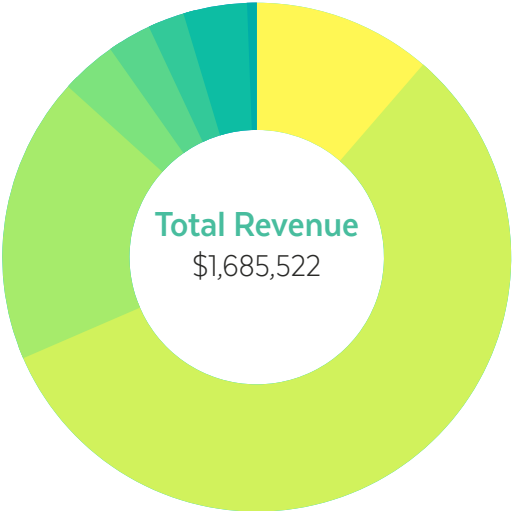


**Sharon Olson**  
*Community Member*

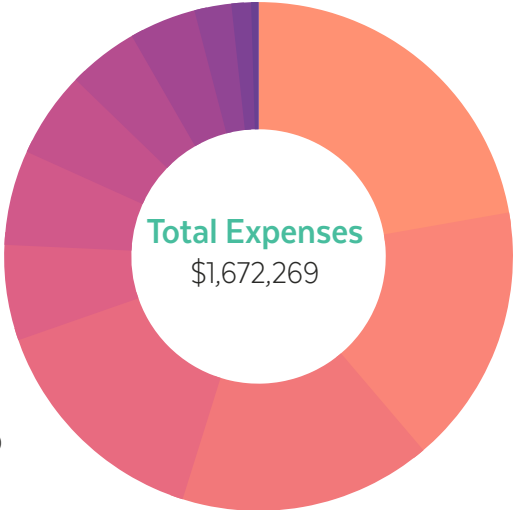
Sharon first came to the Centre nine years ago and has been an active member of our community ever since. Her journey began in the clothing room. Due to disabilities, raising kids and recovery from trauma, Sharon had never really worked before. Her paycheque from her position in the clothing room was her first one ever and she told us “I wanted to frame it I was so proud of myself. It was a good feeling. My family was proud.” We’re proud of her too! Sharon then took our Red Road to Healing Program, which helped her recover from years of abuse, taught her how to speak up for herself, to be proud of her Indigenous heritage and to believe in herself. A graduate of our WE WIL: Women Empowering Women Into Leadership program, she worked as a mentor in our settlement program. Today, she is the volunteer knitting and crocheting facilitator and says “I walk around with my head held high now. I didn’t have confidence when I was younger. I learned so much being here. Being here with all the ladies, I learned a lot.”



# SUMMARY OF REVENUE & EXPENSES FOR 2018-2019



- Province of Manitoba - \$191,116
- Federal Government - \$963,473
- United Way - \$306,688
- Winnipeg Foundation - \$59,694
- Happy Sprouts Childminding - \$47,035
- Donations - \$39,102
- Amortization - \$68,136
- Other - \$10,278



- Housing - \$371,732
- Settlement Services - \$276,736
- Administration - \$268,374
- Drop In - \$248,083
- Community Engagement - \$101,475
- Social Enterprise - \$100,697
- Operations - \$91,606
- Mentorship - \$74,652
- Amortization - \$70,975
- Happy Sprouts Childminding - \$39,270
- Indigenous Programs - \$20,825
- Financing - \$7,844



## OUR FUNDERS IN 2018-2019

Assiniboine Credit Union  
Manitoba Housing  
Winnipeg Regional Health Authority  
LITE  
Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada  
Neighbourhoods Alive!  
Spence Neighbourhood Association  
Status of Women Canada  
United Way  
Manitoba Green Team  
City of Winnipeg  
Winnipeg Foundation  
Homelessness Partnering Strategy  
Youth in Philanthropy  
End Homelessness Winnipeg  
Indigenous Women's Healing Centre  
Jewish Women's Foundation  
MB Healthy Living



## DONATE TODAY

**Your support is so important.** You can provide life-changing opportunities for many women and their families. Your help is critical in creating a thriving centre where women and families can move from where they are to where they want to be.

**Please make your tax deductible donation today at [wcwrc.ca/support](http://wcwrc.ca/support) or send a cheque to: WCWRC, 640 Ellice Ave, Wpg., MB, R3G 0A7. Together we can ensure every woman gets the help they need.**

You may want to support us with a monthly donation. Many supporters find monthly giving an easy and cost-effective way to support women in need year-round. **Join today at [wcwrc.ca/support](http://wcwrc.ca/support).**



## West Central Women's Resource Centre

*"The centre is like my second home."*  
~ Participant

*"[WCWRC] gave me and my grandkids a meal when we were out of food."*  
~ Participant

*"Without [WCWRC], years ago I wouldn't have been able to gain employment."*  
~ Participant

*"I like this place cause I relax and have coffee with my friends and talk joining fun."*  
~ Participant

