



WEST CENTRAL
WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE
ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE BOARD CHAIR

For over two years, safety has been top of mind for all of us. While being safe matters deeply, it has also caused isolation for many people in the community. And without each other, who do we belong to? Safety and belonging – we all need both to thrive. At WCWRC, this means not just housing, *but supporting a sense of home.*

**IT MEANS ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY,
AND PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO EAT
TOGETHER, WHETHER GATHERING IN THE
GARDEN OR IN THE DROP IN.**

It means meeting people's basic needs and knowing that one of those needs is *connection to community.*

As we slowly move out of the medical emergency of the pandemic and public health restrictions are lifted, we are working to welcome community back to our space, as safely as we can, to share in that sense of belonging. At the Centre, that has meant slowly resuming in-person programming and increasing the number of people who can access the space at a time.

It has also meant addressing the critical need for housing among many of the people we serve, who have also experienced gender based violence. In the last year, we have purchased a vacant apartment building and begun renovating it to provide safe and supportive housing for our community. You can learn more about this exciting project on page 8.

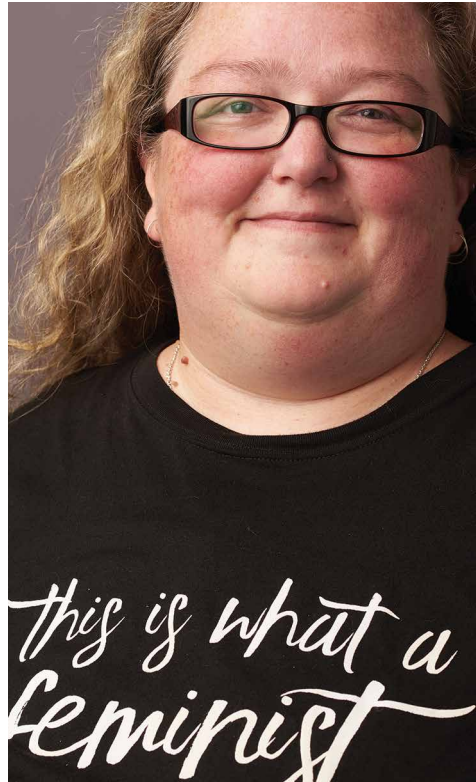
Together we have weathered one of the most prolific storms in recent memory. We are grateful to our funders, donors and

partners agencies for their unwavering support during this difficult time. We are grateful to our staff who have shown up, tirelessly to continue to walk with our community through this crisis. And we are most grateful to our community, who continue to trust us and support us. **Together is where we all belong.**

With gratitude,



Lorie English, Executive Director
Cate Friesen, Board Chair





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PROFILE: MOLLY DUNBAR

My name is Molly Dunbar, and I grew up in the small town of Morris, Manitoba. I moved to Winnipeg, completed an undergrad degree in Sociology at the University of Manitoba, and continued my education with a diploma in Community Economic Development at Red River College.

My time with RRC and the small, close-knit classes is where I began to develop roots in Winnipeg and fall in love with the city; this allowed me to grow in my awareness, my passion, and my responsibility to community. I realized my way of walking through the world didn't reflect that of most of the folks that I wanted to be working with and supporting.

You can read all the books in the world, but until you sit down with somebody who's going through something, it doesn't really hit in the place where it truly allows you to begin to understand. I wanted to build my understanding so I could do my work in the best way possible.

In 2016, I was hired at WCWRC as a Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Worker. A lot of the time, it wasn't just about finding

an answer; folks wanted to feel seen and heard, to know that they belonged, and to know that they were not alone, no matter how big or small the challenge was. The most important part to me was trying to build that strong and respectful relationship with each person, so they could feel comfortable in sharing what they wanted – or needed – to share.

I HAVE A LOT OF PRIDE AND LOVE FOR THE GREAT RELATIONSHIPS I'VE BUILT THROUGH THE YEARS, WITH COMMUNITY AND MY COLLEAGUES. I'M GLAD THAT THROUGH MY WORK AT WCWRC, I HAVE THE CHANCE EVERY DAY TO TRY TO BE A SMALL PART OF BUILDING THE TYPE OF WORLD WE ALL WANT TO LIVE IN.

Many of the lessons I learned as a Settlement Worker came with me as I transitioned into my current role as Labour Market Intermediary. In both roles, encouraging that sense of belonging is essential. It's so important to build relationships, to truly listen to someone's story, and help facilitate all the pieces to support someone as they take the next steps in their desired direction.

If I describe more about what my current role means, it's about providing employment support to newcomer women, gender diverse folks, and sometimes men in their families. This role serves as a bridge for someone looking to take the next steps toward their goals and opportunities.

The other piece of my work is being involved with the Happy Sprouts Childminding Services and Taking Root Childminding Training, supporting folks as they learn skills that will help them get a specific type of employment – working in a daycare, or working for WCWRC as a Childminder.

I have a lot of pride and love for the great relationships I've built through the years, with community and my colleagues. I'm glad that through my work at WCWRC, I have the chance every day to try to be a small part of building the type of world we all want to live in.



BUILDING A SENSE OF BELONGING

Within weeks of the pandemic arriving in Manitoba, reports of gender-based violence reached crisis levels. Winnipeg already had some of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the country before the lockdown, but mandates to stay at home increased isolation – and risk – for many more people. For people whose housing was already precarious, the situation was even more dire.

The options are particularly limited for people living in poverty, as they face long waits for low-cost permanent housing – waits that can have tragic consequences for themselves and their children, including homelessness, child apprehension, increased poverty, social exclusion, or the life-threatening danger of leaving short-term shelter to return to a violent household.

We also know that when people leave violent relationships, their connections to family and friends are often disrupted or entirely severed, resulting in significant isolation at the time they most need a trusted support system to count on. They need to rebuild a community of support and a sense of belonging so they can heal and confidently move forward. We knew we had the ability to provide something different.

The experience and knowledge we have gained through supporting community over the past 20 years led us to envision an innovative new model of transitional housing, offering women and gender-diverse people and their children a longer-term residency combined with the wrap-around supports they need to build a secure life on their own. Through funding from the Federal government's Rapid Housing Initiative at Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) we were able to purchase a vacant three-storey apartment building at 590 Victor Street to convert to a mix of affordable three-bedroom, two-bedroom, and one-bedroom units.

WE KNEW WE HAD THE ABILITY TO PROVIDE SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

The Transitional Housing project, which will be named by community before opening, will offer safe, supportive and culturally appropriate transitional apartments where women, gender-diverse people, and their children can live for two years – or longer, if needed – giving them the time they need to stabilize and secure



long-term housing. Importantly, others who understand and value them so they can rebuild a peer network, friendships, and a sense of belonging and community will surround them.

The Transitional Housing project will offer a comprehensive range of integrated education, life skills and employment programming in the primary level of the building. Being only a few blocks from WCWRC's space at 640 Ellice Ave, residents will also have easy access to additional programs, one-on-one supports and another neighbourhood gathering place for themselves and their children.

Working alongside sister agencies such as North End Women's Centre, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc., Willow Place and Wabung Abinoo-njiig, we will ensure that people who are healing from violence are wrapped in a supportive and caring environment through a coordinated service delivery model and that their healing will include the spiritual, mental, physical and emotional self.

We continue to raise funds to complete this project. We are grateful to the many funders and donors that have already committed to this project's success. The building is scheduled to open in the spring of 2023.



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

DROP IN

Washroom, shower, laundry, phone,
Internet access

Access to hygiene items, harm reduction
supplies, traditional medicines, and
extreme weather supplies

Information and referrals to other services
and organizations

Community workshops

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

1-1 job readiness support and
group programming

Employment and skills training
opportunities

Employment-focused
conversation circles

FOOD SECURITY

Meal program and emergency food
hampers

Outreach van for people experiencing
homelessness

Community garden

HOUSING

HOMES – housing and income security
support

More Than 4 Walls Housing First program

Emergency hotel stays for houseless
women during COVID

MENTORSHIP AND VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

*WE WIL: Women Empowering Women
into Leadership* program

Honourarium-based employment training

Volunteer placements

Student placements

NEWCOMER PROGRAMS

Settlement services

1-1 counselling

Healing Together group program

Gender-based violence case management

One-on-one GBV supports

Conversation Circle and workshops

Art therapy

POLICY & RESEARCH

Public policy advocacy

Contributions to policy reports and
responses

RESTORING THE BALANCE

Family Violence Prevention: Red Road to
Healing and Men's Circle

Ceremonies and events

Elder and Knowledge Keeper supports

Access to medicines and medicine picking

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: **SETTLEMENT SERVICES**

WCWRC's settlement team is dedicated to helping newcomer women and their families connect, learn, grow, and build their lives in their new city. We help women identify their needs, set goals, connect to the community, access services, and make informed decisions. These steps move people closer to their goals, and help create stability and a sense of belonging for themselves and their families.

WHAT OUR SETTLEMENT TEAM DOES

Our team helps ensure newcomer women and gender-diverse folks are aware of available services, have their needs and assets understood, are connected to the right services, and are supported while they access services. We help newcomers acquire skills and connections in order to integrate into Canadian society and improve their socioeconomic outcomes.

For some, we are the first point of contact after their arrival in Winnipeg – we provide a welcoming, safe, and trustworthy space. For that reason, our settlement workers do home visits, help people navigate the transit system, and accompany them as they start school, visit the doctor, or attend other appointments. We

help participants learn the settlement process and pathways, and provide information to access services in their neighbourhoods and their communities. We all need connection to feel like we belong.

“WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED, I WAS MADE
TO FEEL WELCOME BY EVERYONE AT THE
CENTRE. **TO THIS DAY THE STAFF ARE
ALWAYS WELCOMING AND OFFERING ANY
HELP TO ME AND MY CHILDREN.**”

For others, WCWRC remains a source of support long after they move to Winnipeg. We provide services for any immigrant woman or gender-diverse person regardless of their immigration status thanks to our funders. We have been able to support refugee claimants, international students, people who have a work permit, temporary visa holders, permanent residents, and naturalized citizens.



OUR UNIQUE APPROACH

We are more than simply a program or settlement service. What makes us unique is the holistic approach from our team of settlement workers. Our team has lived experience as newcomers, and knows how to empower immigrant women in many critical areas. We strive to guide newcomers through their personal settlement needs, with resources and assistance relating to culture, education, recreation, finance, social services, and more.

Newcomer women have different needs at different stages of their settlement journey, and we meet them where they are; assisting them in setting goals, and finding the right programs. We encourage empowerment, and foster independence, resilience and involvement by recognizing, affirming, and building on the resources, experiences, skills and wisdom of newcomers. The settlement program is always looking for opportunities to create connections and social interaction among newcomer women. For many of our participants, we are like a second home!

CONNECTED TO OUR COMMUNITY

Learning English is an important step for newcomers. English skills enhance their capacity to obtain information about daily life in Canada, and increase their chances of obtaining

employment. WCWRC's virtual English Conversation Circles are friendly, welcoming spaces to work on language skills, but also provide emotional and social support. We invite guest speakers from different fields so newcomers feel engaged, and connected to others.

"WHEN I CAME TO WINNIPEG FOUR MONTHS AGO IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT. I WAS SCARED **BUT YOU HELPED ME TO LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT TOPICS AND TODAY I CAN DO MANY THINGS.**"

We understood that switching to virtual classes would have excluded some of the Centre's most vulnerable participants within our program. For that reason, we offered in-person Coffee & Chats, as pandemic regulations allowed. These sessions included activities like group crafts and self-care practices, and allowed participants to stay connected while continuing to improve their English skills.



A NEW NORMAL

Settling into a new country can feel isolating at any time, but the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic meant immigrants and refugees were facing new struggles and challenges. Restrictions made it even harder for newcomers to connect with members of their communities. To counteract this isolation, our settlement team remained available for in-person, virtual, or telephone meetings as public health guidelines allowed.

"I WILL CONTINUE TO RECOMMEND
THE WCWRC TO ANY NEWCOMERS
I MEET. **THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME
AND MY FAMILY.**"

The global effects of the pandemic continue, and so does WCWRC's settlement work. We continue to welcome, advocate for, and support newcomers to Winnipeg, making sure they know they belong.



376

**PEOPLE SUPPORTED
WITH HOUSING**

85 HOUSED
THROUGH
HOMES
AND MT4W

120
SUPPORTED
WITH EIA
NAVIGATION



31862

TOTAL MEALS SERVED

16,360 MEALS SERVED AT THE DOOR

15,502 MEALS SERVED ON OUTREACH

OUTREACH SUPPORTED

40 PEOPLE

PER DAY (AVERAGE)

SEVEN DAYS A WEEK

OUR GARDEN YIELDED

100LBS OF FOOD



110

**NEWCOMERS SUPPORTED
BY SETTLEMENT STAFF**

419 SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

240 SUPPORTED FOR ENGLISH
CONVERSATION CIRCLES

PEOPLE OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

WCWRC was built by and is sustained by remarkable people. As a way to honour their contributions, every year we present Distinction awards – previously called Women of Distinction. This year, as part of our commitment to greater gender inclusivity, we are renaming these awards to be the West Central People of Distinction. These awards recognize those that have gone above and beyond expectations in their contributions and commitments to the well-being of the Centre, our values, and our community.

CAROLYN MOAR

Carolyn has been involved with the Centre since it was just an idea held by community women in the neighbourhood. After many years of supporting the Centre as a volunteer, she joined the staff team as a Knowledge Keeper and worked with women who have experienced gender-based violence, through the Red Road to Healing program. While Carolyn is now retired, she continues to offer supports to the Centre through the facilitation

of Red Road to Healing, supporting our Men's Healing Circle, leading ceremony for staff and community and providing valuable advice and guidance to the Centre. Her contagious smile and heartfelt laughter warm every circle we sit in with her.

MARGARET (NAN) COLLEDGE

Nan joined the WCWRC board in 2012, but her journey with the Centre began even before that. She was a strong advocate for the Centre to move out of its first home in the basement of the John Howard Society and was an active volunteer during the time that the Centre was fundraising for the purchase of our 640 Ellice Ave. location and worked hard to make our dream a reality. On the board, Nan brought the wisdom of years of board experience, sound financial management and a strong commitment to the non-profit sector. She was able to mentor both board and staff and her contributions to the board developing a strong governance structure were critical. Nan resigned from the board in 2017, but has remained a loyal friend to the Centre.



MANITOBA HARM REDUCTION NETWORK

The Manitoba Harm Reduction Network (MHRN) has been a sector leader in improving service delivery for people who use substances. As a partner agency of WCWRC, they have provided ongoing training to our staff team on the principles of harm reduction and the use of naloxone. We have had the privilege of learning from their exemplary model of hiring peer workers, and hope to live up to that standard with our own peer workers. They have been advocates at many network tables, calling on the government and the non-profit sector to make Manitoba safer and more inclusive for everyone. At a time when drug poisoning is on the rise and the pandemic is making it harder for people to access low barrier supports, MHRN has continued to be a leader in raising awareness and providing education to all. We are grateful for all they do to make our community stronger.

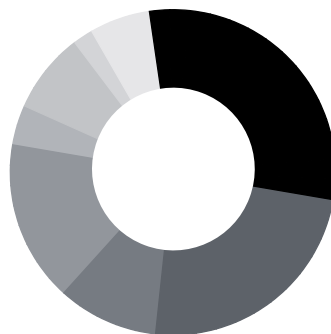


REVENUE AND EXPENSES

For a second year, the global pandemic impacted the Centre's operations both in terms of program delivery and finances. Some funding originally earmarked for in-person programming was diverted into ongoing outreach efforts, enabling the Centre to support the community's changing needs. Funders recognized this need and graciously supported these redirections.

2021-22 saw the Centre enter into several multi-year funding agreements in particular with Provincial departments such as MB Non-Profit Housing, MB Justice and MB Family Violence prevention. Having these pockets of funding confirmed over several years is significant for the stability and financial health of the organization.

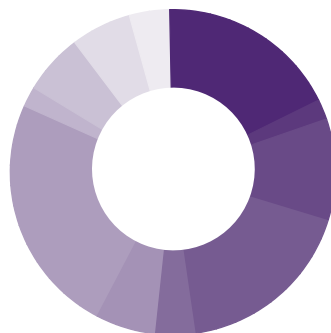
Finally, WCWRC saw an increase again this year in support from individual donors. In total, \$263,944 was received through donations; more than \$70,000 higher than the last highest year! The Centre is ever grateful for this support and for the relationships that have been fostered with donors.



REVENUE

■ Federal Government	\$926,760
■ Province of Manitoba	\$748,509
■ Anonymous Donor	\$310,756
■ United Way	\$498,411
■ Winnipeg Foundation	\$134,435
■ Donations	\$263,944
■ Amortization	\$76,338
■ Other	\$167,642

TOTAL \$3,126,795



EXPENSES

■ Administration	\$569,738
■ Amortization	\$71,163
■ Covid Support/Outreach	\$370,850
■ Drop In	\$479,333
■ Employment	\$156,324
■ Financing	\$10,193
■ Healing Together	\$159,328
■ Housing	\$749,698
■ Mentorship	\$68,118
■ Occupancy	\$163,723
■ Restoring the Balance	\$194,773
■ Settlement	\$125,925

TOTAL \$3,119,166

A HEARTFELT **THANKS**

The achievements we have highlighted in this report would not be possible without your generosity and caring.

Because of you, we have been able to continue to offer crucial supports to women and families during another difficult year.

THANK YOU!



2021/22 **FUNDERS**

Anonymous Donor	MB Housing
Canadian Women's Foundation	MB Justice
Community Food Centres Canada	MB Non-Profit Housing Association
Employment & Social Development Canada	MB Status of Women Secretariat - Family Violence Prevention Program
End Homelessness Winnipeg - Reaching Home	Protect MB
Johnston Family Foundation	Second Harvest
MB Families	United Way Winnipeg
MB Green Team	Winnipeg Foundation
	Women & Gender Equality Canada

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West Central Women's Resource Centre

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