



2023/24 ANNUAL REPORT

# WEST CENTRAL WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE





### *Building Together: Nurturing Community*

A view from the playtrium, on the third floor of our new transitional housing building. The playtrium is a special space, with plenty of natural light. This welcoming environment where children and families can play together is located right next to the laundry room, so children can enjoy books and toys while the parents wait for laundry.



---

*West Central Women's Resource Centre is located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. The water we drink is sourced from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation.*

GREETINGS FROM

# *Our Board Chair and Executive Director*



We are so excited to share our achievements for this past year with the community, as our community is a key motivator for us. The Centre has been lively once again, with a return to a full drop-in programming schedule and all of our groups resuming after the pandemic.

We know that many people in the city continue to struggle to see their housing and food security needs met, are experiencing gender-based violence, and striving to find resources to support their mental health. These needs are reflected in the increasing demands on our services, which we work

every day to meet. We also remain committed to advocating for the needs of the community and to see real systems change, so that families can live full and healthy lives.

Over the past few years, we have been working on building our new transitional housing project that provides direct housing for people exiting spaces where they are experiencing violence. We are excited to share that the building welcomed its first tenants earlier this year. Tenant services and recovery supports are within the building, as are community and play spaces for

tenants and their families. Look for more details later on in this report!

We are grateful for the generosity of the funders and donors, the teams of contractors who worked on the building, and our staff and board for their hard work and support during the development of this new community resource. This was a large-scale endeavor for us, and we couldn't have done it without the support of the community. Thank you!

We also want to thank the volunteers and mentors who bring their lived expertise to our space and contribute so meaningfully to making our community stronger. And finally, to our community for continuing to trust us, for sharing your knowledge with us, and for making the Centre the vibrant space that it is.

Sincerely,



Nicole Barry,  
Board Chair

Lorie English,  
Executive Director

AT THE CLOSE OF ANOTHER BUSY YEAR, WE WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE DEDICATION AND CARE THAT OUR STAFF TEAM BRING TO THEIR WORK EVERY DAY. **THE NEEDS THAT WE ARE SEEING IN COMMUNITY ARE INCREASINGLY COMPLEX AND REQUIRE CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS. OUR STAFF RISE TO THIS CHALLENGE CONSISTENTLY, WITH LOVE AND COMPASSION FOR THE PEOPLE WE WALK ALONGSIDE.**

# Programs and Services

## **DROP-IN**

Washrooms, shower, laundry, phones, community computer with Internet access

Access to hygiene items, harm reduction supplies, extreme weather supplies, Indigenous medicines, diapers and formula

Information and referrals to other WCWRC services and external organizations

Community programming and workshops

## **FOOD SECURITY**

Daily meals for drop-in and outreach participants

Emergency food kits

Community garden

## **HOUSING**

HOMES – homelessness, housing and income security support

Support for women exiting the Justice system through HOMES

More Than 4 Walls Housing First program

Access point for Naatamooskakowin - Winnipeg's Coordinated Access system

Housing and Income workshops and presentations

## **OUTREACH**

Daily encampment visits

Access to hygiene items, harm reduction supplies, activity kits, Indigenous medicines, and extreme weather supplies

EIA intakes, housing searches and connection to WCWRC Housing programs

Information and referrals to other WCWRC services and external organizations

Safe rides to shelter and scheduled appointments

## **EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING & EDUCATION**

Group and one-on-one job readiness support and programming

Workshops and skills training opportunities

Volunteer, Mentorship and Student placements

Happy Sprouts Social Enterprise

## **NEWCOMER PROGRAMS**

Settlement services

One-on-one gender-based violence supports

Conversation Circles

Newcomer Education and Workshops

Community Connection programming

## **POLICY & RESEARCH**

Contributions to research reports with public policy recommendations

Public education and media engagement around public policy solutions

Public policy advocacy and systems change

## **STRENGTHENING THE CIRCLE**

Family Violence Prevention: Red Road to Healing for women/gender diverse people and Men

Indigenous ceremonies and recognition events

Elder and Knowledge Keeper supports

Access to medicines, medicine picking opportunities

Drumming & rattle making workshops, Ribbon skirt making workshops, Beading workshops

Indigenous parenting program

TRC weekly gathering July-September - Tea and Bannock

## Staff, Childminders, Mentors, and Board Members

### STAFF

Adrea Meades  
Amasiles Buzato  
Andrea Taillieu  
Anisha Saddler  
April Linklaker  
Braelynn Hofer  
Carey Richards  
Carter Graveline  
Catherine Ruiz Moreno  
Charlie Eau  
Charlotte Roulette  
Dharma Aguilar-Cardenas

Diana Jarzab-Perchak  
Elby Gebremeskel  
Ella Taylor  
Gloria Knott  
Grace Klassen  
Haidee Maderal  
Halima Jelloul  
Heather Grant  
Inna Provozina  
Janis Ducharme  
Jen Buhr  
Jess  
Jessica Chartrand  
Jo Salazar

Jolene Wilson  
Kalyn Maskiw-Connelly  
Karina Flores  
Karlii Beaulieu  
Kat Roberts  
Katherine Turner  
Kelsey Guyot  
Kirsten Bernas  
Kora Vandale  
Krys Korman  
Krystyne Hastings  
Lara Rae  
Levi Bone

Liliana Sanchez Cortes  
Lindsay Tosit  
Lorie English  
Mac McDougall  
Mareike Brunelli  
Maria Mairongo  
Mary Ajayi  
Meg Burton  
Megan Carrothers  
Megan Michell  
Melissa McGregor  
Miranda Scott  
Molly Dunbar



Monisha Shah  
Morgan Bernier  
Neenerz Roulette  
Nunu Deng  
Oriana Conde  
Pam Mulhall  
Rachel Bergen  
Rae Roller  
Ren Armstrong  
Shena Alcock  
Shy Narciso  
Soheli Akhter  
Tammy Leask  
Tia Alsaïdi

Tianna Greaves  
Victoria Nickle  
Vivian Ketchum  
Wendy Kissick

**MENTORS**  
Johanna Chesnut

**CHILD MINDERS**  
Abeer Amir  
Amie Cowan  
Brieana Wilson  
Cheryl Bruce  
Colleen Moose  
Deqa Elmi

Elsabet Deboch  
Hibo Ali  
Ilham Mohamed  
Molok Al-Hebshi  
Olena Synchuk  
Shanpeng Guo  
Shukri Shikh  
Suad Ahmed  
Tetiana Somina  
Tetiana Zakariaieva  
Zeinab Thabit

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
Michelle Pereira  
Chair

Nicole Barry  
Vice Chair  
Jen Si  
Treasurer  
Cate Friesen  
Director  
Freyja Arnason  
Director  
Raven-Dominique  
Gobeil  
Director  
Michelle Lagunay  
Director  
Kayla Matheson  
Director  
Maria Monteiro  
Director  
Natalie Smith  
Director  
Gillian Toth  
Director



# Jessica Chartrand



My name is Jessica Chartrand. I'm from Duck Bay, Manitoba. I'm Anishinaabe Ojibway, and I have three children, Natalia, Sasha and Jesse. I come from a big family, and we are very close.

I am the Property Manager of the Transitional Housing Project at WCWRC and I started in this position in August 2023. I knew about the Centre's services and supports through a relative who visited the drop-in. They had shared that the staff there are really welcoming and they were able to access services

that they weren't comfortable accessing elsewhere.

In my role, I manage intake referrals from our partner agencies, take care of maintenance for the building, lease administration and any tenant related needs and issues that may come up. I welcome new tenants and offer them their first tour of the building and units, and I get to know them a bit more every day. I spend time with them to talk or just listen. It's important to listen because a lot of the times folks have not had anybody to listen to them. When

you're sitting down with somebody who's vulnerable and sharing their experience, being emotional, maybe it's their first time sharing, so you must listen to them so they know they are heard and they matter. And they are now in a safe space. It's a very rewarding job, you really get to see that everyone plays a role in making a difference in our tenants' lives. Families can be very emotional, very happy. You can see how much they appreciate the opportunity to live here.

This is a beautiful safe space with several areas families can utilize. They can go sit in our round room, the roof, the playtrium and know that they're welcome. This is home for two years if they decide that's how long they're going to stay. My favourite space in the building is the roof top garden. I go there every day on my break, and anytime I need to process and think things through. It's a good place to deal with some stress, I've been recommending that our tenants take advantage of it. There's green space with the garden, there's furniture that is comfortable to sit in and relax. And it's just a nice, safe space - a space of healing.

When I think about the families who move here, I think about my family, that's the most important thing in my life. My family's health, safety and wellbeing is my

priority. What drives me in this work is seeing families heal and empower themselves. To know we can make a difference and give hope, so that these families are no longer running. A lot of this pain is generational, and we can break the generational trauma here, in this safe space. We definitely need more transitional housing like this, there are too many people who have nowhere to go, so they go back.

WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY CAME TO APPLY FOR THIS POSITION, I WAS DRAWN TO IT BECAUSE I KNEW IT WAS A ROLE THAT WOULD ALLOW ME TO HELP WOMEN AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE. I IMMEDIATELY FELT LIKE I BELONGED AND I WOULD RECEIVE MY OWN HEALING HERE AS WELL.

My hope is to see more places like this - places of safety for families to move to, so that they can begin their healing, and rebuild.



# Lena Gott

Hi, my name is Lena Fay Gott and my spirit name is Healing Stone Woman. I was born in Rainy River, Ontario, and I'm from the Sapatawayak Cree Nation. I am the mother of two daughters and one son. I made my home here in Winnipeg, Manitoba for about 35 years or so. I am what is known as a Sundancer, a Ghost Dancer and a Pipe Carrier. I am following my traditional ways of life.

I started volunteering at WCWRC in 2018, when staff approached me asking if I would like to teach a beading class. I said yes to volunteering because I wanted to share what I know about beading, and I really wanted to be there for other women because when I was younger, I didn't have anybody to teach me. I first started learning to bead on a loom when I lived with my sister in Minnesota. I started out my beading experience selling bracelets to her friends. I didn't get back into beading until I started coming to WCWRC to attend the beading group in 2015.

I am very happy that I'm doing this. I'm just glad to be part of the community and helping other women out. The most rewarding part is that I get to meet people with different backgrounds. I like meeting different people and getting to know them and their stories. I respect others and listen to what they tell me, and hopefully that makes a difference.

I always want to learn more about beading and teach what I learn to others. I hope to bring in beading on the loom to the program. It would be exciting because you can make your own designs, and it's an easy way to bead.

Volunteering has a positive impact on me as well, I feel I can accomplish my goals and that I am helpful. I'm happy that I'm here to make a difference. Before I volunteered at WCWRC, I didn't always feel that way, and it affected my personal life.

I'm happy to be here, thank you for giving me a chance to share what I know. I'm very happy and grateful.

# THIS YEAR:

**21,612** VISITS TO DROP IN  
**9,645** CONNECTIONS  
ON OUTREACH

**305**  
PARTICIPANTS  
SERVED

**100** ATTENDED ONLINE ENGLISH  
CONVERSATION CIRCLES

**108** SUPPORTED BY  
SETTLEMENT STAFF

84 SUPPORTED WITH EVICTION PREVENTION  
99 INDIVIDUALS/FAMILIES REHOUSED

**337**  
SUPPORTED WITH  
HOUSING



**989** supported with cultural  
connection and traditional  
medicines

**196** supported by family,  
cultural, counselling,  
and GBV programs

**13** Full Moon  
ceremonies hosted



**30,471**  
*meals*  
PREPARED + SERVED

**650 HOURS** OF  
CHILDMINDING  
WITHIN WCVRC

**1,150 HOURS** OF  
CHILDMINDING  
TO OTHER GROUPS



**9,317**  
HYGIENE  
KITS  
PROVIDED

**2,506**  
*Naloxone*  
*kits provided*



**12,891** HARM  
REDUCTION KITS

**1,330** SHOWERS TAKEN   **809** LOADS OF LAUNDRY  
**79** SUPPORTED IN ACCESSING BIRTH CERTIFICATES  
SERVICES PROVIDED IN **12 LANGUAGES**

# *Building Hope in Winnipeg*

For 20 years, West Central Women's Resource Centre has been supporting women and families escaping gender-based violence in our community. Winnipeg has some of the highest rates of intimate-partner violence in the country, and is ground zero for Murdered and Missing Women, Girls and Two-Spirit people. Alongside our partners in the sector, we have long been committed to doing everything we can to make sure women and gender diverse people are safe.

One of our biggest struggles over the years has been finding safe, affordable, and supportive transitional housing where people who have experienced violence can heal and work on their goals for the future. During the pandemic, it became even more evident that women and gender diverse people who are at the intersection of gender-based violence and housing insecurity are among the most vulnerable in our community, and their needs the most acute.

We believe that housing is a human right and know too well that many

women and gender diverse people trying to get away or recover from violence have no choice but to stay with their abuser, couch-surf, stay in a family violence shelter, emergency shelters or even bus shelters just to survive. On average it takes 7 attempts for women to leave their abuser before they are successful, and we know that a lack of safe, affordable housing to land on is a key factor in this struggle.

This is why we were so excited to be able to embark on our first ever direct housing project in the fall of 2020 and to see it open to tenants in the spring of 2024. With the support of generous funding from so many funders and private donors, we were able to open a 16-unit apartment building in the heart of the West End. Converted from a historic 113-year-old building, these units were purpose built for women, gender diverse folks, and children who are exiting situations of violence. The thoughtful design is embodied in the physically accessible spaces and the beautifully

designed “playtrium,” attached to the laundry room, which is stocked with books, toys, and a sensory playground for kids to utilize while parents do laundry. The building also hosts a Round Room for Indigenous cultural programming, offices for WCWRC’s administrative team, and on-site social supports for tenants. On the roof, a fully-fenced garden and play space brings open-air and greenspace to inner-city living. WCWRC has constructed a beautiful, centrally located home for tenants to rest and heal from violence.

This new housing offers safe and supportive apartments where women and gender diverse people can live for up to two years, giving them the time they need to stabilize and secure long-term housing with the support of our housing team. Rent is geared-to-income, the gold standard for affordability. Here, people don’t have to choose between paying rent and buying groceries for their families. The building is also accessible, including units built using universal design, and includes an elevator to ensure access for everyone.

Tenants will be referred to housing in this building through WCWRC’s staff team, as well as through our referral partners, who are the North End Women’s Centre, Ikwe Widdjiitiwin, Willow Place, and



The Roof Top Garden is a place of healing that provides a safe space for families to spend time outdoors.

Naatamooskakowin, the Coordinated Access program through End Homelessness Winnipeg.

The building is also conveniently located only two blocks from our 640 Ellice building, giving residents easy access to the basic needs, one-on-one supports and neighbourhood gathering place that the Centre provides there.

We know from our extensive research for *Connecting the Circle: A Gender-Based Strategy to End Homelessness in Winnipeg*, that housing with wrap-around supports is critical for women and



The Round Room, fully enveloped in cedar wood panels, is a space for smudging, ceremonies, sharing circles and other gatherings.

gender diverse people and their families. This project meets several of the recommendations from our report and will go a long way to ensuring people are safe and can start their healing journey in a supportive community.

This project was made possible with the generous support of the federal government's Rapid Housing Initiative through the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba, End Homelessness Winnipeg, Winnipeg Foundation, and a host of other foundations and private funders. We are incredibly grateful for the support of our donors,

without whom this project would not have been possible.

Together we have built a long-needed and beautiful space. This building will become a hub of hope and renewal for women and gender diverse people and their families.



# Housing

HOUSING IS A CORE COMPONENT OF OUR WORK AT WCWRC, AND THE HOMES AND MORE THAN 4 WALLS PROGRAMS AIM TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING INSTABILITY BY OFFERING COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT TO THOSE IN NEED.

## *Our Beginnings*

HOMES (Housing Options, Mentorship, and Economic Security) is one of the longest running programs we have offered since our times in the basement of 583 Ellice. A staple

in the community, HOMES staff have helped hundreds of people through the years with housing searches, eviction prevention, securing income, system navigation, and more.



In 2015, we started our More Than 4 Walls program, following a Housing First model, which prioritizes moving individuals living unsheltered into permanent housing as quickly as possible, without preconditions related to sobriety or treatment. In 2022, we intensified our partnership with End Homelessness Winnipeg and became an access point for Naatamooskawin (Coordinated Access).

Both programs play a crucial role in helping women and gender-diverse individuals secure safe, stable, and affordable housing, despite many challenges community are presented with. The severe shortage of affordable housing

units that meet safety standards is compounded by inadequate shelter benefits, which make it difficult for participants to secure housing that is both affordable and suitable for their needs.

### ***Housing is a Human Right***

All the barriers folks face not only delay the securing of housing but also contribute to ongoing housing instability, as participants may find themselves repeatedly rehoused in unsafe or unsuitable environments. This constant rehousing cycle undermines the stability necessary for participants to work on other important goals, such





as employment, education, and personal development.

Recognizing housing as a human right requires action to remove barriers that prevent people from accessing safe and affordable housing. This includes addressing systemic issues such as poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to essential services. It also involves ensuring that individuals and families are not subject to arbitrary evictions and that they have access to legal protections.

For WCWRC, this means working tirelessly to ensure that women and gender-diverse individuals in Winnipeg can overcome barriers to housing and achieve the stability necessary to thrive in their lives.

This is why the advocacy work our staff do with landlords, Employment and Income Assistance, health care and other systems is crucial to ensure folks can progress in the goals they set for themselves.

### ***Connecting with Transitional Housing***

The creation of our new transitional housing project offers hope and a footprint for what is possible, if only we can dream big enough. By providing safe and supportive living, we are providing people at the intersection of homelessness and gender-based violence with the opportunity to stabilize their lives. The project integrates comprehensive wrap-around supports that are vital for fostering long-term stability and self-sufficiency. These supports are tailored to meet the diverse needs of each resident, offering a holistic approach to their well-being. Each tenant or family is matched with a housing worker, who will work with them in their goal setting and towards independent living. The supportive environment fosters a sense of community and belonging, reducing isolation and empowering residents and families to take control of their future. We look forward to this exciting new facet of the work we are embarking on.

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 West Central People of Distinction awards. 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.*



**CATE FRIESEN**

Cate's journey with WCWRC started when she met our Executive Director during the Winnipeg Foundation's Fast Pitch program. Shortly after that, Cate joined the Board and brought with her extensive knowledge of non-profits, media and story-telling. Through much of her seven years on the Board, she served as the Board Chair and has guided the organization through

tremendous growth, a large capital project and a global pandemic. She leads with a level head and the kindest heart, and serving the community is her priority at all times. Cate has centred relationships in all that she has done with the Centre and is beloved by staff, Board and donors alike. We have all learned a lot from her over the years and her leadership on the Board will be greatly missed. We are incredibly grateful for all that she has given the Centre.



## **MELISSA MCGREGOR**

Melissa started at the WCWRC as a student practicum placement. She later joined the team in October 2013 as a part time settlement support worker. Her caring approach with community members quickly made her a trusted resource and she moved through a number of roles at the centre, including doing one to one employment supports, managing and growing our social enterprise, Happy Sprouts Childminding and supervising our Drop In team. Melissa eventually brought her knowledge of the centre and community to a new position and became the Director of Programs, supporting all program areas with reporting, evaluation and planning. She was an integral part of the management team and held much institutional knowledge about the centre. She moved on to exciting new opportunities in 2023 after 9 years with us and she has been truly missed.

## **TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROJECT REFERRING PARTNERS**

In a year where we are celebrating the opening of our new transitional housing building, we would be remiss to not acknowledge the support and wisdom of our referring partners for this project - North End Women's Centre, Ikwe Widdjiitiwin, Willow Place, and Naatamooskakowin, the Coordinated Access program through End Homelessness Winnipeg. This group of community agencies represents a continuum of care for people who are experiencing gender-based violence and homelessness, including intake and coordination, emergency shelter, transitional housing and one to one supports. Together with these partners we have been able to centre the safety of women and gender-diverse people and ensure that they have the love and care that they need to recover from situations of violence. We all share the belief that housing is a human right and we are grateful to be developing this much needed community resource in partnership with these community leaders. Together, we can accomplish great things.





# Many Heartfelt Thanks

The programs and services we are able to offer community would not be possible without your generosity and caring.

Because of you, we have been able to continue providing crucial supports to women, gender-diverse folks, and their families.

**Thank you!**



## 2023/24 FUNDERS

Anonymous  
Canadian Red Cross  
Employment & Social Development Canada  
End Homelessness Winnipeg – Reaching Home  
MB Families  
MB Labour & Immigration  
MB Justice

MB Green Team  
MB Non-Profit Housing  
Royal Bank Canada  
Toronto Dominion Bank of Canada  
United Way Winnipeg  
Winnipeg Foundation  
Women & Gender Equality Canada  
Women & Gender Equity Manitoba

*Please consider donating to our work today at [wccwrc.ca/donate](http://wccwrc.ca/donate)*



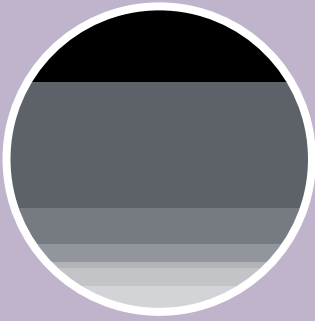
# Thank you Volunteers!

The volunteers at WCWRC are so essential to what we do here. From being a welcoming presence in the drop-in, or tending to our community garden, or helping with our fundraising campaigns. We could not achieve all the goodness that we do without the loving care and support of our wonderful volunteers. Thank you for all that you've contributed and continue to do for our beautiful community.

Katherine Angulo  
Alex McKane  
Chanel Michaud  
Hazel Whitford  
Nikki Cook  
Joanne Nimik  
Johanna Chesnut  
Amelia Williams  
Bridget Burke  
Elizabeth Moon  
Jennifer Cook  
Julie Mousseau  
Maria Lueth Isela  
Morales Orozco  
Donna Sutherland  
Bailey  
Morlock-Tellier  
Olena Sydor  
Hnin Dhlamini

Elizabeth McAdam  
Francess Amari  
Nhu Tran  
Isha Khandelwal  
Reena Ghimire  
Lena Fay Gott  
Sharon Olsen  
Kathy Hanson  
Wanda Stacey  
Cheryl Costen  
Krista Braun





## REVENUE

■ Federal Government	- \$953,167
■ Province of Manitoba	- \$1,649,872
■ United Way	- \$472,669
■ Anonymously	- \$265,000
■ Amortization	- \$83,038
■ Donations	- \$167,253
■ Other	- \$307,002

**TOTAL \$3,898,001**



## EXPENSES

■ Administration	- \$765,696
■ Amortization	- \$84,940
■ Drop In	- \$707,093
■ Employment	- \$295,123
■ Financing	- \$13,677
■ Housing	- \$644,269
■ Outreach	- \$257,571
■ Occupancy	- \$170,959
■ Policy & Communications	- \$177,582
■ Settlement	- \$179,024
■ Staff Professional Development	- \$95,602
■ Strengthening the Circle	- \$344,390

**TOTAL \$3,735,926**

## Financial Report

In 2023-2024, the Centre's multi-year capital project entered the final stages with the completion of construction and final touches. The rising cost of inflation and multiple unforeseen site conditions resulted in increased project costs, and what started as a \$6M project over 2 years ago, rose to over \$10M! As costs rose, we engaged both funders and private philanthropists and are grateful that these folks were able to share our vision and step up with additional dollars. In April 2024, we began welcoming families into their new homes and providing them with wrap-around services as they heal from gender-based violence.

We were also fortunate in 2023-2024 that our programming was fully supported through grants and ongoing funding. This has enabled us to set aside a sizeable portion of our general donations from this past year into a reserve fund for upcoming repairs and maintenance on the two buildings we own and operate.



West Central  
Women's  
Resource  
Centre

640 ELLICE AVE,  
WINNIPEG, MB, R3G 0A7  
INFO@WCWRC.CA  
204-774-8975

**supportwomen.ca**