

YWCA TORONTO

at a glance

YWCA Toronto has been advancing positive change since 1873. As one of the largest multi-service organizations in the city, we are strong champions of gender justice. We provide adaptive, intersectional, and transformative programs that empower women, girls and gender diverse people throughout critical stages of their lives. The work we lead helps those we serve escape violence and overcome poverty, by enabling access to shelter, affordable housing, community support programs, employment and training, child care, and a plethora of supportive services. We also engage in systemic advocacy.

At YWCA Toronto, we are committed to continuous learning. Notably, our advocacy is driven by the experiences of the communities we serve and the expertise of our front-line staff to ensure our work reflects the diverse needs and realities of those we support. Each year, we support nearly 13,000 women, girls, and gender diverse people living at various intersections of race, culture, religion, socio-economic status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, migration experiences and other dimensions of identity. With the support of funders, sponsors, donors, community partners, and staff, we are committed to building a promising future for all.

HOUSING AND SHELTERS

Since its inception, YWCA Toronto has been a steadfast provider of affordable and supportive housing. As one of Canada's leading housing providers for women, gender diverse individuals and their families, we recognize that access to safe, accessible and affordable housing is a human right, and we advocate at all levels of government for investment to ensure this right. Our housing portfolio includes two gender-based violence shelters and two emergency shelters for women and gender diverse individuals. We also offer a transitional housing program, and over 820 units of permanent, supportive housing as well as a licensed child care centre at our Bergamot Apartments which provides a child-centered program for infants, toddlers and preschoolers living at this site and in the surrounding area. The lack of affordable housing across the country remains one of the most significant barriers preventing survivors of gender-based violence from leaving an unsafe home and securing a safe new one.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR SURVIVORS

We support women and gender diverse individuals throughout their healing journey. Included in this community of supportive programs is Here to Help, which supports child witnesses of violence, as well as their mothers. Our Choices for Living program offers free support groups for women and gender diverse individuals who want to explore and strengthen their mental health, build skills and share knowledge to address loneliness, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and/or other barriers to their wellness. In our Breakthrough program, we provide art-therapy support to survivors of gender-based violence, as well as women and gender diverse individuals navigating mental health challenges. Similarly, YWCA Toronto's Inspiration Studios recognizes the transformative power of art as a catalyst for healing through the



87 Elm Street, Toronto, ON M5G 0A8 | 416.961.8100 | www.ywcatoronto.org

Charitable Business #10822 9865 RRO001 |

YWCA TORONTO

skills-building work of pottery. Lastly, through our December 6th Fund, we distribute interest-free loans to help those fleeing violence to rebuild their lives in safety. Through all of our programs and services, YWCA Toronto is committed to facilitating community healing in a safe and caring way.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Each year, we help thousands of women and gender diverse individuals across Toronto build sustainable economic futures through our employment and training programs. We provide employment supports, deliver skills training, and have partnered with certified colleges to offer technical training and certifications that support individual journeys from entry-level positions to careers with better salaries, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. We cultivate invaluable connections with employers to facilitate rewarding jobs. We also offer newcomer women settlement services such as English language training, job search support, career and vocational assessment, and educational and employment counselling. Our programs foster confidence and determination, crucial for navigating today's job market. We honour the skills, ambition and lived experience that our program participants bring to their work, communities and society.

GIRLS' PROGRAMS

To support the growth of girls and gender diverse youth, we offer youth-focused programming at our Girls' Centre in Scarborough and at Camp Tapawingo, located on the shores of Georgian Bay. At our Girls' Centre, girls and gender diverse youth aged 9 to 18 have the opportunity to try new activities, develop leadership skills, and explore relevant issues to them in a supportive environment. Youth are encouraged to think critically about social issues and are given an opportunity to develop meaningful friendships with peers from different cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. At Camp Tapawingo, our campers become leaders through our counsellor-in-training program, team-based activities and other camp-wide activities offered throughout the summer. We recognize the leadership potential in all girls and gender diverse youth.

ADVOCACY

To engage in advocacy work at YWCA Toronto means amplifying the voices of the community members we serve, drawing attention to the issues and barriers they face, and pushing for progressive policy solutions. We work closely with community and coalition partners, including nine other YWCA Member Associations across Ontario and our greater YWCA movement, to advance gender equity in our city, province and country. Underpinning all of this work is our commitment to anti-racist action and reconciliation. YWCA Toronto regularly contributes feminist insights to the public discourse in response to government initiatives and policies. Our advocacy at all levels of government and in the community shapes both public policy and public awareness.

We strive to support a society where everyone is safe, where access to housing and child care is a right, not a privilege, and where all women, girls and gender diverse people are empowered to advance politically, socially, and economically.

