



# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



**YWCA**  
HALIFAX

A TURNING POINT  
FOR WOMEN



# Message from the President and Executive Director



In 2017, we witnessed the modern movement for gender equality and women's rights gain momentum and create enormous positive impact. Beginning with the Women's March on Washington, the year continued with remarkable strides including of course the #MeToo and #Timesup movements. Time Magazine named The Silence Breakers as their Person of the Year and in Canada, the federal government announced a gender budget as well as a National Housing Strategy that represents the largest federal investment in housing in decades and one that makes a clear commitment to housing instability faced by women and girls.

For us at the YWCA of Halifax, we felt heard as we continued the call for our community to stand Strong With Her.

We hope you enjoy this community report as a brief overview of a busy year, doing what we are meant to do and what we love to do. The YWCA of Halifax continued delivering exceptional supports and being a clear voice on the issues affecting women and girls in 2017.

While we made the difficult decision to transfer the YWCA childcare centre on Barrington Street to new owners, ending a long history of operating downtown, we are able to better focus on programs and services that best meet our community needs.

In 2017, we offered more childcare, improved our housing programs and continued to expand our community programs. Family Home Daycare, the Home for Good Project, the Safe Landing Project and the Newcomers Connect Program are a few of our proudest achievements this year. We were also thrilled to be selected and host a Canada 150 event called Strong With Her | Her Immigration Story celebrating newcomer women who have made Nova Scotia their new home. And we were excited to support some of our young mothers to participate in the Strong Girls, Strong World conference in Ontario.

Read on for more and please visit our website, follow us on Twitter and like us on FaceBook.

Thank you to our many supporters, staff, volunteers, students, and most of all, the participants, for all of your strength in 2017.

Sincerely,

Heather Hanson, President

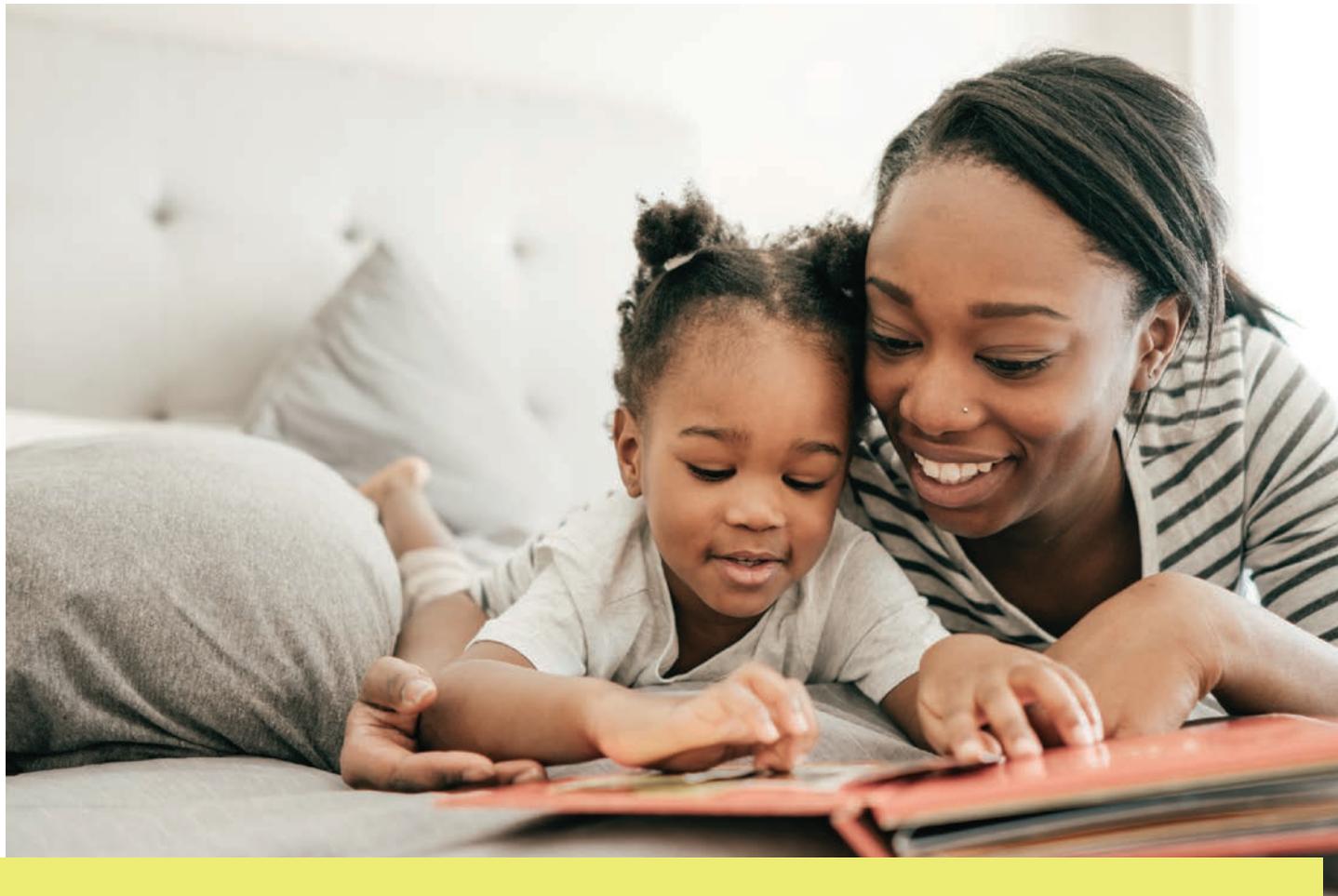
Miia Suokonautio, Executive Director

# Vision

Women and girls empowered  
in a safe and equitable society.



# Mission



We build economic security, promote wellness and create opportunities for women, girls and their families by providing a strong voice and integrated services.

For over more than a century, YWCA Halifax has had the great privilege and honour to work with women who are new to Canada. Whether it was meeting war brides at Pier 21 or facilitating conversation groups for refugee women, we have approached our work with the core belief that women, working together, will find a way.

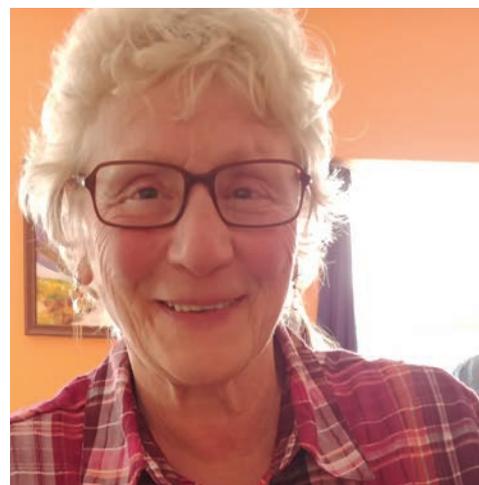
## Canada 150

### Grace Caldi

Home Country: Italia

Moved to Canada: 1967, the centennial of Canada

Participant in the YWCA Halifax's Food First Program



#### **What was your life like before moving to Canada and what encouraged you to immigrate to Nova Scotia?**

The place I was born, Triesta, Italy was very difficult. It was after the war and there was very little work; We struggled. I lived in a small two-bedroom apartment with my father, three brothers, my husband, and my three year old daughter. My mother abandoned the family during my late teens. Since I was the only girl in the family, my father wanted me to stay home and take care of everyone. It was very crowded and difficult.

It was a struggle to survive. The men of the house struggled to find work. As the woman of the house, I was often stressed trying to find enough food because of the financial situation and a food shortage in that part of Italy. We didn't have a television or washing machine. I washed clothing for six people by hand, hanging the clothing on a line on our balcony. This was a period of rebuilding in Italy, after WWII. It was the most beautiful place on earth.

In 1967, the Canadian Embassy in Italy was looking for families to move to Canada. We met with the Embassy, learned about the country and decided it would be a wonderful place to move.

Once we were approved, we planned our trip across the Atlantic. I, my husband, and my three year old daughter Christina boarded a ship called Christopher Columbus.

#### **Tell us about your first 6 months in Canada? What were the best and most difficult experiences?**

During the first six months in Canada, we lived at Pier 21. It was the winter and the workers at Pier 21 were trying to find a job for my husband. The staff there treated us like royalty. We had a little room with a double and single bed, and the room also had a private full bathroom. It was like an all-inclusive resort; everything was taken care of.

#### **What is your life like now?**

My life now is very good. Very secure and wonderful, and my three children have done very well. Canada provided my daughter and my two boys with a wonderful education, and they appreciate this very much.

Italy is my country. Canada is my home.

# Canada 150

## Noor Almsalmah

Home Country: Syria

Moved to Canada: 2016

Participant in YWCA Halifax's Newcomers Connect Program



### **What was your life like before moving to Canada and what encouraged you to immigrate to Nova Scotia:**

We left Syria in 2012 because of the dangerous living situation. My husband and I already had two year old twins and I was pregnant with our third child. Tanks were driving by our house. Bombs would be exploding and scaring us all. Bullets were coming from all directions. We were afraid we would die.

We packed a few things, only what we could carry, and set off by foot to Jordan. It took us a day and a half to get there. We walked, took a bus, and walked some more. Our new baby arrived the day we arrived in Jordan.

Jordanians were nice and they treated us well, but as we were not citizens, we could not legally work there. This made it very difficult to get by.

We knew that the United Nations were working to help people move to countries around the world. Our first choice was Canada. We applied to the refugee program and were so excited to move to Canada. We had family in the Halifax area and this is where we would live.

We knew about Canada's Human Rights, its kind people and their respect for all religions and cultures. We knew our children would have a better future here.

### **What were your dreams for life in Canada?**

I dreamed of having a nice home for our family and a good education for my children. We dreamed of my husband being able to work legally and in safe conditions.

Now that we are here, I dream of having something for me. I want to build a career. Maybe even have my own business.

I want our family to integrate into Canadian life. I would like for us to make Canadian born friends and celebrate their holidays with them and invite them to ours.

### **What is your life like now?**

Thankfully we now have English class and I attend the YWCA Halifax Newcomers Connect Conversation Club. This has made an incredible difference.

Life here is beautiful. My main concern was for us to be safe. I now have that.

I have two heart beats. One for Syria and one for Canada.

# Program Highlights and Milestones

“ Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women.  
- Maya Angelou



## Food Security

YWCA Halifax aims to inform people of healthy eating, and provide affordable and accessible fresh food.

1,400

produce boxes distributed to the community

## Early Learning and Childcare

Ensuring access to childcare is critical to ensuring the economic security and equality of women. Studies show that universal access to early learning decreases poverty rates for women and their families. We know that every dollar invested in universal, high quality early childhood education produces a two dollar social and economic return to our society.

## Employment Skills

We move women from poverty to possibility to help them reach their full potential.

## Family Home Day Care

A voluntary program offered to lessen isolation, provide knowledge and encourage professional development. We help provide safe and quality childcare for children from infancy to school age in private home settings at no cost to the provider.

**34** families have started their own business by opening a Family Home Daycares

## New to Canada

Reaching over 500 Newcomers annually, we provide support and educational programming in areas such as budgeting, savings, credit and buying a home in Nova Scotia. We provide newcomers with a better understanding of how to navigate Canada's financial system. At the same time, are improving their settlements and integration experiences.

**500+** participants joined financial literacy for newcomers

**250** tax returns and government benefits filed resulting in over \$150,000 in refunds for low income newcomer families

## Supportive Housing

There are hundreds of women and children in Halifax who remain severely disadvantaged and without the basic necessity of a safe home. Despite over 100 years of progress toward women's equality, recent decades have seen a tragic and needless rise in women's homelessness across Canada. Single parent families, mostly led by women, make up the majority of homeless families.

We are dedicated to providing women with housing security, and integrated support to break the cycle of homelessness.



## SHYM Supportive Housing for Young Mothers

SHYM provides supportive housing, parenting support, and life skills development for at risk young single mothers ages 16 to 24. SHYM is open to young mothers in their third trimester of pregnancy or who are independently parenting their child or children and are in need of supportive housing. SHYM also provides housing for at risk single mothers who are attending a post-secondary institution full-time.

**84** women and children secured safe housing

## WISH Women in Supportive Housing

WISH provides safe, secure, supported housing to 34 single women. The women at WISH are 19 and older and have experienced homelessness, and have barriers to stable housing.

# Community Events 2017



Year after year we are grateful to the community for supporting our Signature Events. We would like to extend sincere gratitude to all those who did yoga, walked, rocked and celebrated Canada 150 with us.





**PowerCamp: 25 young women aged 10 - 15**  
**Youth Advisory Council: 50**  
**GirlSpace: 6 junior highs 100 girls**

Because girls matter and because young women are the best experts of their own lives, YWCA Halifax has been committed to the advancement of girls and young women for more than a century. In fact, it's right in our name.

Girls-only programs offer safe spaces for girls to come together and share their experiences, learn from and support one another, and to participate fully in topics of relevance to them. Using a girl-centred model, YWCA's programs support young women to identify what is important to them and to build action at multiple levels.

Despite the labour action by teachers in the public schools for half of the year, YWCA served more than 200 girls in 2017.

Our Youth Advisory Council produced a "Let's talk about sexual violence" zine where young women and gender non-conforming youth instructed all of us to "Talk to your friends like we've been talking to ours. Keep the energy alive. Keep the conversation going."

YWCA's Strong Girls, Strong World project saw young mothers who are often overlooked when we think about youth leaders attend a national conference on girl's leadership in Ontario. For the first time, conference organizers needed to consider the issue of on-site childcare to allow full participation of all young women.

Our GirlSpace program recommenced in September in six junior high schools where girls overwhelmingly continued asking for open discussions about dating and healthy relationships.

Our ongoing work to address cyber violence saw the release of yolov.ca, an online resource by youth for Youth OnLine Overcome Violence.

We're especially proud that our free PowerCamp was extended to two weeks where more than half of the 25 participants were newcomer and Syrian girls. In PowerCamp, girls literally crushed stereotypes that minimize women and girls in our community.



# The Power of Partnerships

We work to establish new partnerships and to nurture those who graciously support our cause. As a result, we continue to make it possible for women and children to escape homelessness, violence, and instability, and move towards a brighter future.

Thank you to all of our generous supports!

Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia  
Arbonne  
Brendan Maguire – MLA for Halifax Atlantic  
Canadian Heritage  
Canadian Women’s Foundation  
DSM Nutritional Products  
Employment and Social Development Canada  
Grant Thornton  
Government of Canada  
Halifax Protestant Infant Foundation  
Halifax Regional Municipality  
Halifax Youth Foundation  
Hands Extended  
Home Depot  
Homelessness Partnering Strategy  
Lumbermart  
Montana’s  
NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women  
NS Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage  
NS Department of Community Service  
NS Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
NS Department of Health and Wellness  
NS Department of Justice  
NS Department of Labour and Advanced Education  
NS Office of Immigration  
Pavia Gallery and Cafe  
Public Safety Canada  
Status of Women Canada  
United Way Halifax  
Universal Realty Group  
YWCA Canada  
YWCA Toronto



Killam has been one of those generous supporters of the YWCA Halifax, supporting housing programs for women experiencing homelessness, our employment programs for women moving out of poverty, our newcomers programs for women recently arrived to Canada, as well as a financial donor and contributor. They are much more than a donor, they are part of the YWCA Halifax Team!

Thank you Killam

# Financials

	2017	2016
Revenues	\$3,405,373	\$3,005,560
Expenditures	\$3,488,175	\$3,144,777
Excess of revenues over expenditures	- \$82,802	- \$139,217
Investment income	\$6,943	\$25,206
Loss on disposal (Note 1)	- \$167,810	—
Excess of revenues over expenditures	- \$243,669	- \$114,011

## Revenues

Donations and Bequests: \$27,999  
 Foundations and Charities: \$459,303  
 Fundraising Events: \$19,760  
 Government Funding and Grants: \$1,379,012  
 Miscellaneous: \$15,366  
 Program Fees and Earned Income: \$1,503,933

## Expenses

Program Expenses: \$586,860  
 Fundraising Expenses: \$2,587  
 Operational: Insurance, Audit, Phone, etc: \$327,553  
 Rent, Facility Repairs, Maintenance: \$297,497  
 Salaries, Benefits, Professional Development: \$2,099,946

Note 1: The closure of the Barrington Childcare Centre was a difficult and emotional time for the YWCA team.

During 2017, we entered into a purchase and sales agreement for the Barrington Childcare Centre due to ongoing losses at the centre. Under the terms of the agreement, we sold all of the assets related to the operations of the Barrington Childcare Centre for a purchase price of one dollar plus the assumption of all liabilities (including staffing commitments and ongoing leases). The difference between the net proceeds on disposal and the net carrying amount is recognized in the statement of revenues and expenditures. As a result, we incurred a loss on disposal of assets of (\$167,810), primarily due to the assumption of centres lease.



# Staff / Board

## YWCA Halifax Staff

Miia Suokonautio	Executive Director
Donna Snair	Director of Programs
Brigid Langill	Director of Philanthropy and Communications
Shannon Steele	Finance Manager
Kerri Johnson	Childcare Manager
Krista Dunn	Housing Manager
Tishe Petite	Family Home Daycare Manager
Lindsey MacIsaac	Community Programs Manager
Wanda Hill	Facilities and Operations Manager
Charlene Gagnon	Manager of Advocacy, Research and New Initiatives

## Board of Directors

Our volunteer Board members contribute many hours to YWCA with sound governance and strategic guidance. We are grateful for their expertise, wisdom and dedication.

Heather Hanson	President
Alana Patterson	Vice President
JoAnn Alberstat	Treasurer
Jennifer Forde	Secretary
Cyndy Allen-Rawding	Director
Jennifer Ashton	Director
Hilary Beaton	Director
Alison Bird	Director
Meghan Cadue	Director
Caroline Flinn	Director
Pernille Jakobsen	Director
Lee-Anne Kovacs	Director
Henrietta MacNeil	Director
Michele Merrick	Director
Mercy Mutale Motey	Director
Jodi Wainman	Director





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