

MAY 2021

OUR VOICE

YWCA HALIFAX Newsletter



IN THIS ISSUE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Oh my, an e-newsletter in your inbox. Like, whoever reads these things anyway? But listen, our rationale is sound. People keep telling us, "I had NO IDEA the YWCA did all that!" as if, ahem, they hadn't read every page of our website in their free time.

So, like tater tots, we're bringing you delicious and bite-sized. My personal satisfaction-guarantee commitment to you is that our newsletter be AT LEAST one of three things: funny (or maybe what I think is funny), inspiring, or thought-provoking. So, we won't be like cheap dog food, full of filler. Only quality, only when you need it.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

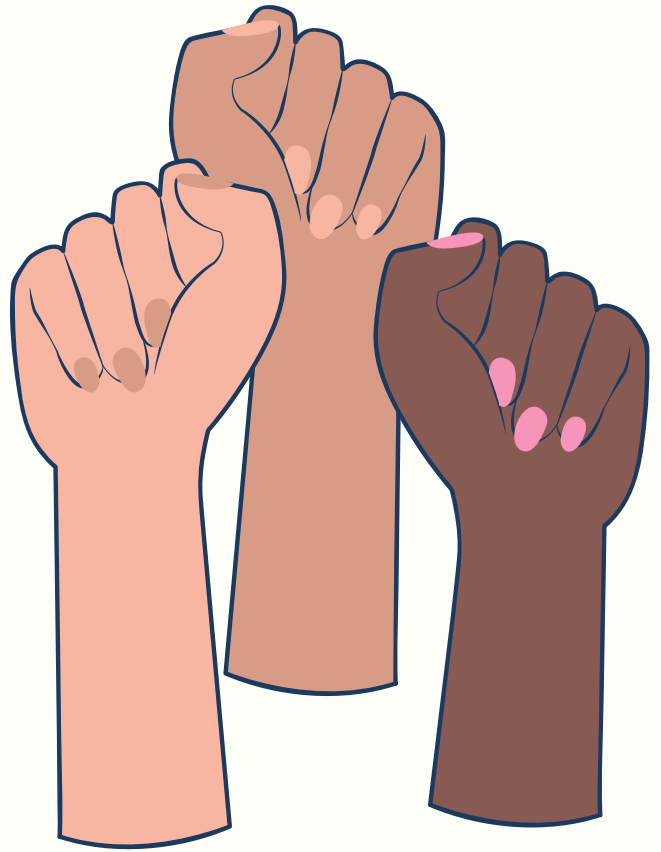
FIGHTING ANTI-BLACK RACISM

YWCA SHIFT CHANGE IS CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE FOR WOMEN IN TRADES

INSPIRED BY HER PIVOTS TO AT HOME

In this issue, three very, very cool things:

- **Shift Change** is a truly innovative and lofty project to support women in skilled trades through unconventional avenues. Did you know that only 4% of the skilled trades workforce is women and that this number has been pretty much the same since 1970? (Fact check w Maggy.) We've decided to try something a little different with amazing results. Read on to learn more.
- **Fighting anti-Black racism** is a journey the YWCA has been on for quite some time. We've still got pavement ahead but read a bit about what this has meant for us as an organization and how we need to move beyond virtue signaling, public statements, and what's really at stake when we start celebrating too early.
- And what could be more inspiring than spending a bit of time with trailblazers in the field of sport? Having been around for almost 150 years, the YWCA was organizing women's sports leagues before girls had access to Phys Ed in the public school system. Women's participation in sport is still very much a political act and our May 6 event, **Inspired by Her**, is your chance to meet some very, very amazing women and maybe win some fabulous prizes.



Inspired yet? Got the wheels turning? Keep reading and remember there are no substitutes for informed progressive policy, courageous thinking, and a foundational commitment to the rights and dignity of all people. **Together, we got this.**

Fighting Anti-Black Racism

YWCA Halifax has been an organization dedicated to the service of women and girls for almost 150 years. In order for us to be of service to all women, it is our priority to ensure that all women feel that our services are relevant and that our advocacy is informed by their experiences. The non-profit sector often defaults to what they presume is a neutral position, culturally and politically, in order to be 'open to all'. However, in practice this tends to result in predominantly white governance and leadership, and services that are 'neutral', which ends up excluding diverse people.

At YWCA Halifax, we don't want to be neutral, because when you are neutral, you are complicit. We are currently evaluating how this intended neutrality has impacted the following: our governance, leadership, staffing, education, advocacy, partnerships, procurement, staff support, communications, visual representation, resources. And much more.

Why are we sharing this here? We're super duper conscious of the risk of virtue signaling but, at the same time, we want BIPOC women to know that the leadership and staff of the YWCA know that this is their YWCA as much as it is for white women. Last year, one of our staff members raised the concern that our Board of Directors was made up of predominantly white women. So, in June 2020 we recruit only Black Board Members, and we now have a Board of Directors that more accurately represents the communities we serve.

While having BIPOC board members and staff is a super important part of dismantling racism internally, we know that there is more to it than that. Instead of just making sure that diverse folks know they are welcome at YWCA Halifax, we want to build our programs and services with them in mind. We're working on building a YWCA that truly serves all women.

YWCA's Shift Change program is changing the landscape for women in skilled trades, starting on the inside...

The program began in 2019 with a gender-based needs assessment and preliminary research on the challenges both men and women workers face in skilled trades. Findings from male supervisors included that men feel undervalued, that more women in the workplace is a difficult adjustment for men, and that time is needed to adapt, and that it's difficult to be a champion for change, with men fearing that in pursuit of doing 'the right thing' if they make a mistake they will lose their job.

Given these findings, the Shift Change team and YWCA recognized that, in order to effect real change for women in trades, the transformation needs to start with existing male workers and culture. In January 2021, Shift Change began a training pilot for male supervisors called 'Leadership in Today's World' in partnership with NSCC. The 30-hour training equips male supervisors in skilled trades with the tools they need to work towards culture change that supports and increases equity, diversity and inclusion. In other words, the training helps male supervisors to prepare their mostly male teams so that as more women enter into the field, they are met with a culture that is supportive and inclusive.

Shift Change's approach recognizes that the massive gender-gap in skilled trades is not an issue that starts with women. While it's important to invest in growth opportunities for women and gender-diverse people, one of the major barriers that women face when entering into skilled trades, and that may hold them back from pursuing the field, is toxic workplace culture. Shift Change, like all of YWCA's work, is setting the stage so that as women enter into the workforce, they are met with the same camaraderie and support that gives the field such high job satisfaction rates among men.

Event Shift: Inspired by Her Shifts To A Virtual Conversation at Home

INSPIRED BY HER AT HOME



Inspired by Her is a signature YWCA Halifax event that serves as an opportunity for organizations to recognize exceptional women in the area of sport and recreation. YWCA Halifax Leadership, Equity, Activity & Diversity (LEAD) is proud to advance the participation of girls and women in sport, recreation, and physical activity, and empower them to take on leadership roles across these sectors. We transformed our traditional luncheon into an online event: Inspired by Her At Home. With the support of the incredible panel, sponsors, and volunteers our virtual version of Inspired by Her was a huge success. Watch out for future inspiring events.

For more information on YWCA Halifax find us online, [ywcahalifax.com](https://www.ywcahalifax.com)

