



## AWHsome

Newsletter of Advancement of Women Halton

*September 2024*



*AWH is a collaborative of twenty women's groups and social agencies that advocate and amplify the voice of women. The monthly meetings give us an opportunity to hear about the activities and challenges of member organizations. This newsletter is another avenue for readers to learn about AWH member activities.*

### *A Message from the Chair*

Our wonderful Anne Douglas has come to the end of her two year term as Chair of AWH and we thank her profoundly for all her work on our behalf. She will Chair the September AGM and general meeting, after which a slightly new structure will be launched.

#### **Did you know that**

The Chief Science Advisors for Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States - are all women?



On July 3, Oakville MP Anita Anand wrote: My sincere congratulations to Lt.-General Jennie Carignan on her appointment as the Chief of Defense Staff.

I worked closely with Jennie on culture change in the Canadian Armed Forces and have great respect for her work. Jennie, I wish you well and thank you for your career of service.

Here are some notes on what happened this summer in organisations we know and love



In June Oomama and Bronte Grandmothers for Africa joined together for a Virtual Stride and Fundraiser. They “virtually” strode across Canada, hitting all our provincial and territorial capitals, from April 1st to June 30th. Starting in Iqaluit, they strode through Newfoundland and Labrador, PEI, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, and Northwest Territories. This route had them striding 15,077 km. They raised well over \$ 11,000, which will be sent to the many women-led projects in sub-Saharan Africa.



*HSH Executive Director Sara Cumming, 2024 Valedictorian Shannon, HSH Board Chair France Fournier and Oakville North-Burlington MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos...*

June 13 Home Suite Hope hosted a rooftop Appreciation BBQ & 20th Anniversary Celebration to celebrate HSH participants who graduated from Sheridan College

The organization, led by Executive Director Sara Cumming, supports homeless single-parent families through a four-year program. This includes housing, life skills training, a two-year bursary to Sheridan College, books, professional development workshops, mentorship, and employment support.

"Pre-pandemic we were 100% successful meaning that 100% of our graduates left social assistance and subsidized housing for paid employment," said Cumming. "Post 2021 this looks very different with housing inflation."

As a charity with over 20 years of service, Home Suite Hope is shocked by the current obstacles, particularly the surge in average housing costs going from \$1,600 to \$2,500 per month, making affordable housing increasingly scarce.



July 1. On Canada Day, Andrea Gunraj of Canadian Womens Foundation asked us to do three things for gender equality:

**Access these Resources for Ending Anti-Indigenous Racism.** Canada Day is an excellent opportunity to make moves toward decolonization and make a conscious effort to learn about legacies of colonialism.

**Follow us on social media like LinkedIn and Facebook** and encourage your contacts to go to our **website and sign up**, saying, "Yes, #CountMeIn for a gender equal Canada, too." There's power in numbers. Please help us grow this community.

**Subscribe to our Alright, Now What?** podcast wherever you listen to your content. It's a joy to talk to experts and leaders and bring fascinating conversations to listeners like you who care about gender equality.





On July 1 **Child Care Now** announced:

Congratulations to our wonderful board member, Martha Friendly, on being appointed as an Officer of the Order of Canada. Martha is being recognized for her decades-long commitment to the betterment of Canada's childcare system. Her work as founder and executive director of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit has been fundamental to the Canadian child care advocacy movement. We are so happy she's on our team!

Later in July, Members of AWH **Income Security Committee** met with Alex Sarchuk, Commissioner of Social and Community Services and Andrew Balahara, Director of Housing Services at the Regional Municipality of Halton to discuss the roll-out of childcare in Halton. They learned that there has been a mammoth system transformation, and it takes time to implement it successfully. There is need for a solid funding framework that not only covers legitimate costs to keep programs operational but also incentivizes the provision of high-quality services, particularly in underserved areas, and facilitates future expansion. Expansion is needed for accessibility. Management and funding guidelines must keep long-term objective in view.

Region staff suggested that AWH can delegate at the region and use our collective voice with MPP's and the Ministry of Education. Alex and Andrew would be happy to help with data if needed and will let us know when we could delegate.



On July 12<sup>th</sup> former AWH member Irene Clarke died, after a long struggle with cancer. Irene was an early member of AWH, and also of WHAM, Oomama, Golden Horseshoe GRAN and GASP.

She was a long- time supporter of Oakville North Burlington MP Pam Damoff. Pam wrote: “My dear friend, Irene Clarke, passed away early this morning. She was an incredible woman who made Canada a better place. She was one of the first to join my campaign in 2015, and was part of a walking group that walked major roads in the riding carrying handmade signs. She co-chaired the phone canvass for all my campaigns, and always welcomed volunteers with a warm smile and kind words. I know I would not have been successful in my election campaigns without her assistance.

Irene had been active in advocacy since she retired from nursing and devoted her time to volunteer work. An energetic grandma, Irene was an active member of GASP, Grandmothers Act to Save the Planet, where she helped to educate, advocate, demonstrate, publish articles and maintain a highly visible and influential presence in the climate change community. She was a member of GASP’s political action team, watching for opportunities to influence decision-makers at the provincial or national level on matters affecting climate change and human rights. Irene was determined to make the world a better, cleaner place for everyone’s grandchildren, especially hers.

I awarded Irene a Queen’s platinum jubilee pin in 2022 for her community service. She never sought out recognition or awards; she just wanted to get things done and make positive change for our country. She was keenly interested in Canada’s role in the world. She never backed away from hard conversations and she always pushed me to do better. I will miss you, Irene.”

**There will be a celebration of Irene’s life on September 11.  
She will be posthumously awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal.**



On July 23, Housing Minister Sean Fraser announced that the government is investing over \$97 million in low-cost loans through the Affordable Housing Fund. Part of Canada's Housing Plan, the Affordable Housing Fund is a \$13.2 billion program providing low-interest loans and contributions to build new and repair existing affordable community housing. The funding on Tuesday will help **build and repair** nearly 9,000 affordable homes and units across the Hamilton, Halton, and Niagara regions. Projects in Halton Region have received over \$9.2 million to help build and repair affordable homes and units across the region. This investment continues federal government efforts to build more affordable homes for first-time home buyers, families, seniors, couples, and single-income households.

On July 27 there was a **Summer Tea Party** to raise funds for **student education in Jamaica**. *AWH Secretary Ancilla Ho-Young, Lurlene Winter and Norma Byer were there*





**New Hope**

President Joe Biden stepped back from the November election, backing VP Kamala Harris as the Democratic candidate to oppose Republican Donald Trump. When she clinched the nomination at the Democratic Convention on August 2, what had seemed like a terrifying scenario in which Trump secured the Presidency and made himself dictator for life, was suddenly replaced by new hope.



August 5th . As part of the Emancipation Day weekend celebrations, a plaque was unveiled in the Community and Harmony Garden at Queen Elizabeth Park Community Centre, dedicated to CCAH founder Icilda Bailey and long-time President Veronica Tyrrell. There were picnics and music and light refreshments with a Caribbean flair prepared by Oakville Fish and Chips. Musical guest Kevin Adams & Voices of Praise choir soulfully entertained while Nick Gordon kept the little ones busy.

The Emancipation Day picnic took place at the Oakville Museum at Erchless Estate and featured hot Caribbean food prepared by Chef Romaine Newell. Attendees enjoyed live music, family activities, and learned about Oakville's early Black history.





"Emancipation Day is very important for Oakville because this is where a lot of the slaves came from the Atlantic slave trade," said Sheldon Williams, CCAH President. The Emancipation Day Picnic has been an ongoing tradition for CCAH for over a decade. This year saw a great turnout of families, which Williams says is the aspect of the event he is most proud of each year.



Also in August, Environmental Defence shared a report on housing

FIVE action areas: Build in the right places. Build a wide variety of housing types. Build smarter and faster. Invest heavily in non-market, affordable housing. Make housing affordable and part of liveable communities.

<https://www.liveableontario.ca/five-ways-home>

Read the full report "Taking Action Together: Five Ways to Make Homes Affordable in Ontario". It was created and endorsed by a diverse group of community and civil society leaders from a wide variety of backgrounds who care about solving the housing crisis. Read the full press release [here](#).



Last week's announcement of new laws banning women's voices and faces in public has reinforced that Afghan women and girls need our solidarity and support now more than ever.

Over the past 26 years, CW4WAfghan has undergone immense growth and adaptation to advance Afghan women's rights under all circumstances. Your support has allowed us to advance our mission of making the right to learn a reality for Afghan women and girls including building an online high school for Afghan girls who are banned from learning, meeting a 680% increase in demand for scholarships for Afghan women locked out of higher education, and providing over 4,000 students with laptops and internet to access online learning.

As we greatly expand our reach and impact, we are excited to announce that **Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan changed our legal name to Right to Learn Afghanistan as of September 1, 2024.**

As we make lasting advances in upholding the fundamental right to a quality education, our new name opens more doors and invites everyone — regardless of who or where they are — to join us in upholding women's rights.

Our programs, our mission, and our Canadian roots remain the same, and this change ultimately strengthens our efforts to achieve our vision of an equitable world where all women and girls are empowered with the freedom and opportunity to learn.

We invite you to see our [new website](#), and learn more about this exciting transition.

Thank you for your continued support as we begin this next chapter of hope, learning, and impact in support of Afghan women and girls.

In solidarity, *Right to Learn Afghanistan*



# Welcome Back

DRAG BRUNCH & LEARN  
FEATURING MATRAKA

**Sept. 15, 2024**  
**Art Gallery of Burlington**  
**12:00 PM - 3:00 PM**

 Canadian Heritage  
Patrimoine canadien

 Halton  
REGION

 HALTON EQUITY & DIVERSITY  
ROUNDTABLE

*Join us as we launch our 2024/2025 Learning Series at Art Gallery of Burlington at our Welcome Back Drag Brunch & Learn. To kick off Truth and Reconciliation month events, we will be hosting a Brunch & Learn featuring a discussion on Indigenous rights, a delicious Mexican brunch, and live drag performances.*

## ***Ontario Investing in New Supports to Address Gender-based Violence***

*MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos writes:* The Ontario government is launching a call for proposals for new community-based projects that support survivors of gender-based violence. These initiatives will focus on preventing violence through education and awareness, building safer, healthier communities and enhancing well-being and economic opportunities for people and families.

Ontario is investing \$100 million over the next three years in its four-year, cross-government action plan to combat gender-based violence, building on the province's existing investments of \$1.4 billion over four years to end gender-based violence and support victims.

The call for proposals is now open until October 11, 2024. Organizations with innovative projects or approaches that help prevent or address gender-based violence are invited to apply. The province will invest in projects that respond to the needs of local communities in four key areas:

- education and awareness
- early intervention and prevention
- community planning and service integration
- economic security and financial independence
- Learn More: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1004943/ontario-investing-in-new-supports-to-address-gender-based-violence>

## ***Ontario's New Childcare Funding Formula***

*Oakville North Burlington MP Pam Damoff wrote:*

Last week, the Government of Ontario released their new funding formula for the childcare sector. As of January 1st, 2025, Ontario will be capping fees at \$22/day. Estimates from the government of Ontario indicate that this cap will save families an additional \$300 million. We welcome this news as we have been urging Ontario to release this funding model so that operators can plan, grow, reduce



waitlists, and offer parents and children better access to high quality, affordable childcare.

This announcement marks another step towards reaching \$10/day by 2026 and we look forward to seeing the province continue to move forward in meeting the targets of the Canada-wide agreements that includes thousands of new childcare spots, and good pay and working conditions for early childhood educators.



## **POLARIZATION IN POLITICS AND ELECTORAL REFORM**

I have been heartened by the people who have reached out since I announced in May that I would not be seeking re-election.

One of those individuals was Bronwen Bruch, who wanted to talk about how proportional representation can impact polarization in politics. Alongside Sharon Sommerville, she dropped by my office to talk about electoral reform and other issues. I really appreciated their perspective and knowledge on the issue. We also chatted about Highway 413, and the environmental impact it will have without actually easing traffic congestion or meaningfully cutting down commuting times.

Thank you both for taking the time to visit me and to advocate for positive change.



Our community-led partners dismantle inequities that fuel the HIV epidemic, and they equip the next generation of leaders to carry on this life-saving work. In 2023, our partners reached 2.7 million people through their community-centred programs.

Last year, our advocacy reached around the globe, calling for action on health and human rights and increased and decolonized HIV funding. We celebrated the 20th anniversary of the SLF through awareness-raising events and we reflected on the progress made in the HIV response. The number of new HIV transmissions is reduced and access to HIV treatment has increased overall, but global funding for HIV is diminishing, and there is still much work to be done. For 44% of our partners, the SLF is the primary or only source of funding.

Faced with new challenges — the COVID-19 pandemic, climate disasters, political instability, rising costs, legislated hate against LGBTIQ communities, and diminishing global HIV funding SLF partners continue to be lifelines for their communities.

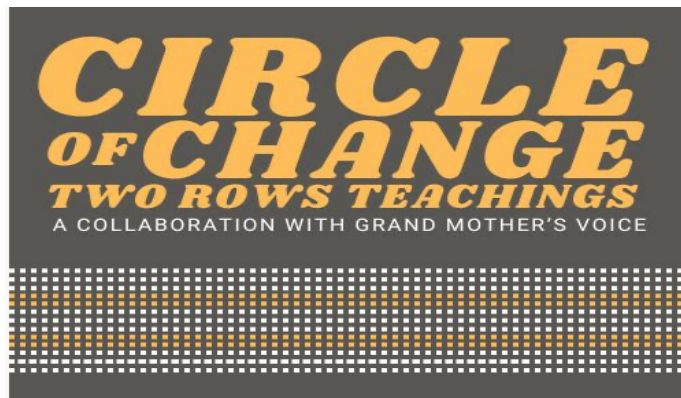
In communities where our partners work:

- HIV treatment adherence rates surpass national averages
- Survivors of gender-based violence have access to urgent care, mental health support and legal services
- LGBTIQ-led organizations are finding ways to continue prevention, testing and treatment where discrimination and criminalization disrupts vital HIV services

- More children are in school, and more girls are graduating, becoming leaders in their communities
- Grandmothers are claiming their human rights, participating in policymaking and taking on leadership roles.

- ***Meg French, Executive Director, Stephen Lewis Foundation***

### **HEDR joins forces with Grandmothers' Voice**



This fall, join us for the Fall Circle of Trust Community of Practice as we delve into the foundational elements crucial for our learning journey. Our focus will be on understanding land acknowledgements and exploring the historical context essential to truth and reconciliation. Through this exploration, we aim to build a solid base for deeper engagement and action in our ongoing DEI efforts.

#### **Fall Dates**

September 23, 2024: Land Acknowledgements

October 23, 2024: Timeline of Truth and Reconciliation

November 7, 2024: How did we get here?



### **Recognizing Local Excellence: Veronica Tyrrell**

On August 27, we remembered a true pillar of the Oakville community. Veronica Tyrrell, a founding member of the Halton Multicultural Council and long-serving president of the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton is remembered as a tireless advocate for diversity, inclusion and community development in Halton.

Proud to remember her life and legacy on

Victoria Tyrrell Day, the 27th of August.



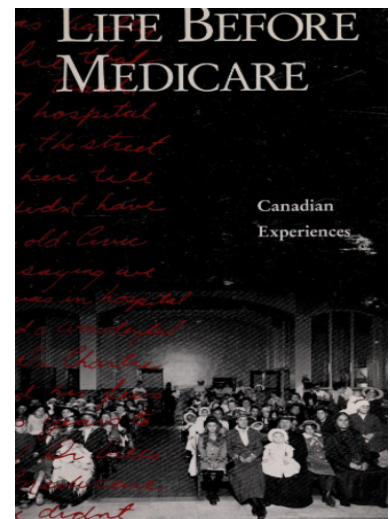
## Life Before Medicare

*Doreen Nicoll August 28, 2024, wrote:*

Some readers may not remember what it was like to live in Canada before Scottish Canadian NDP leader Tommy Douglas saw his dream of universal healthcare become a reality; but things were not great, to say the least.

Don't believe me? Well, that's alright because the Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations collected the lived experiences of folks from across Canada and bound them into a book called, **Life Before Medicare: Canadian Experiences**.

This book lays bare just how bad it was in the 'good old days' when we had to pay for health. Folks went without treatments and often died simply because they didn't have the money for doctor, medical and prescription bills.



But that picture is essentially what Doug Ford, and his Conservative party are painting in Ontario today. Today, Ford is forcing Ontarians back to the 'good old days' where those with money get access to doctors, hospitals, treatments and medications while those without money are denied those essential services.

I invite everyone to join me Sunday, September 8 at 2 pm. at the Westdale Theatre 1014 King St West, for a town hall hosted by Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas NDP MPP Sandy Shaw, an event centered around the impact of privatization on patient care. To register for this event on Sunday, September 8 from 2-4:30pm, visit the link below.

<https://rabble.ca/health/privatization-forum/>

# SENIORS & CLIMATE



## JOIN SENIORS ACROSS CANADA FOR A DAY OF CLIMATE ACTION THIS FALL

**Tuesday, Oct. 1st, 2024**

Rally, walk, sing and take action from  
12 p.m. to 1 p.m. at Oakville Central  
Library, at the corner of Lakeshore Road  
and Navy Street.

# LATER IS TOO LATE!



GRANDMOTHERS ACT  
TO SAVE THE PLANET

## *Dismiss us at your peril*



*Sally Feldman is a former editor of BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour and the author of "Golden Girls: Advice and Inspiration for Today's Grandmothers". She writes for The Guardian.*

"Nans against Nazis" read one large placard brandished at the recent anti-racism protests in Liverpool. It belonged to 71-year-old Pat. "Someone said to me, 'You're too old, don't be doing this,'" she told the Independent. "But as long as they're here, someone's got to do it." She's not the only one who refuses to be invisible. As the editor of BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour for more than a decade, I became so familiar with countless stories of active, busy older women that I've now written a book of advice for today's grandmothers.

I interviewed more than 100 women. Many of them were exasperated at the tired old stereotypes that either portray us as frail, ancient, hobbling, lonely old biddies, or the equally cliched antithesis: "battling grannies" or "granny heroines".

It's still glibly assumed that, once a woman becomes a grandmother, everything else in her life becomes irrelevant. That's absurdly outdated. Whatever their age, many grandmothers will continue working or will lead busy, demanding lives outside their family responsibilities.

This growing backlash is personified by Raging Grannies, a group of activists who campaign across North America on peace and environmental causes, challenging stereotypical views of older women and the assumption that political action is only for the young. During more than 30 years of activism, Raging Grannies have held several anti-war rallies, and in July 2005 five members of the group were charged with trespassing after they attempted to enlist at a US army recruitment centre in Tucson, Arizona.



They represent many grandmothers across the world who are working to make a difference. Frequently, these women are drawn to campaigning by their concern for the environment. This year, a group of older women in Switzerland won the first climate change victory in the European court of human rights, claiming that their country's inaction on fossil fuels violated their human rights. The group of more than 2,000 women, known as the "climate grannies", argued that because older women are more likely to die in heatwaves – which have become hotter and more common because of fossil fuels – Switzerland should do its share to stop the planet heating, and to abide by the Paris agreement target of 1.5C. The ruling demonstrated the power of older women. "We are not made to sit in a rocking chair and knit," said one of their members, Elizabeth Stern.

They aren't alone. Take the International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers, whose participants range from the Arctic to Brazil, Tibet to Mexico. Their faith is based on spiritual principles and the practice of traditional medicines. They're deeply concerned with environmental degradation, poverty, our materialist culture and the destruction of indigenous ways of life. Crucially, they believe that the wisdom of our ancestors can "light our way through an uncertain future".

Other groups were founded to cope with specific challenges. The Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, a cross-continental project formed in 2006, was set up in response to the crisis faced by grandmothers in African countries as they struggled to raise millions of children orphaned by Aids. The project originally



brought together African and Canadian women to support and learn from each other, raising funds and creating educational programmes to support them. The project has since raised more than \$40m, and now includes grandmother groups in Canada, Australia, the UK and the US. Their work is highlighted by the US photojournalist Paola Gian Turco, whose book “Grandmother Power: A Global Phenomenon” assembles an inspiring gallery of women determined to make a difference. Among her subjects are Indian grandmothers bringing solar energy and light to their villages, and Argentinian grandmothers who have searched out and returned more than 100 children kidnapped during the military dictatorship of the late 1970s.

You may not be mounting the barricades, shouting out on Instagram, organising food boycotts or suing your country, but by doing what you can to make the world better for the next generation, and filling your life (and those of your grandchildren, if you have them) with love, goodness and a commitment to ethical principles, you can still be a raging granny. Dismiss us at your peril.

## Watch out for AWHsome in October 2024



