



AWHsome

Newsletter of Advancement of Women Halton

October 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

In September AWH members met again after a summer break.

We would like to extend a special thankyou to Anne Douglas for her work as Chair in the past two years. Her knowledge, experience, and passion for social justice motivate us all. She is organized, committed, compassionate, inclusive, and thoughtful. She looks at problems from many angles and is always open to new ideas and ways of doing things. Her tactful approach to solving problems has been so important in helping our group to function.

This year we are launching an experiment, in which three members will share the responsibility of chairing AWH. Our new Chair for the Fall session will be Teri Shaw. She will rely on members for their help and support in whatever ways they can manage.

We welcomed new members Becky Andrade of CHRL in Milton and Dionne Downer of CCAH in Oakville

There will be monthly Planning meetings at the start of each month and all AWH members are invited to attend via zoom and bring along ideas , issues, projects and activities they would like to discuss. This is the place to be heard!

So far, we have two Standing Committees – Health and Income Security/Democracy. Let Anne Douglas or Joey Edwardh know if you would like to join one of these, or alternatively you could propose a third to Teri.

We are looking forward to an active and interesting Fall!

SEPTEMBER

During the month of September there was much going on.

Oakville MP Anita Anand wrote : Through the 2024 Canada Summer Jobs program, our government invested \$1.3 million to support over 300 jobs within the local community for students and young adults in a wide range of fields, such as: looking after our green spaces, engaging campers, promoting healthy lifestyles, developing talents and more.



In addition, programs such as the Canadian Dental Care Plan and the Canada Child Benefit have helped support thousands of individuals and families within our community, and across Canada.

CCAH New Executive Director



CCAH are excited to announce our new Executive Director Dionne Downer. Dionne has been providing strategic direction, leadership, guidance and operational support for the past 20 years to organisations such as City of Toronto, Canadian Education Association/EdCan Network, Canadian Standards Association

and Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. She is also a member on the Board of Directors for Grief stories. You may reach her at dionne@ccah.ca.

Welcome Dionne!



CCAH had a very busy summer with steelpan and parang performances. They were delighted to find much hoped-for monarch butterfly caterpillars on the milkweed in their pollinator garden. VP Richard Pinnock received the King George III Coronation Medal. They hosted a highly successful summer day camp, helped by the Resilient Communities Fund. They had a visit from United Way E.D. Brad Park. They honoured summer staff who are going on to university. They ran a Leaders in Training Program. And they celebrated Veronica Tyrrell Day.



On September 11, MP Leah Gazan hosted an on-line webinar in support of her **Bill C223 An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income**. She offered a whole kit of [social media sharables](#) and slogans to share . The Bill was defeated at Second Reading, but after some discussion about amendments, the fight goes on.

From MP Pam Damoff:

Celebrating the 8th anniversary of the Canada Child Benefit



MP Pam Damoff wrote: “Since being elected, our government has been prioritizing affordability for families, through benefits for families and children like the Canada Child Benefit (CCB), Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP), and the Canada Carbon Rebate. The Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is one that we introduced and strongly benefits families and children in Oakville North–Burlington, with our riding having among the highest per capita number of CCB recipients and total benefit amount among all ridings across Canada. Over the last two benefit years, 24,000 children in our riding have benefitted from the CCB and over \$124 million in CCB benefits have helped families in our community invest in their children! The CCB is a transformative policy that since 2016 has lifted nearly half a million kids out of poverty across our country.

Welcoming Week is an annual opportunity to recognize the people, places and values that help everyone feel welcome in their community, no matter where they come from.

This year, Welcoming Week took place from September 13 to 22, a chance to reaffirm the important part that immigrants play in shaping Canada’s future, and Canada as a welcoming place for them.

One organization right here in our community working hard to welcome newcomers and exemplifying the values of Welcome Week every week is **Halton Multicultural Council (HMC) and HMC Connections**. Founded in 1978, this community-based settlement agency has helped newcomers settle and integrate into a welcoming and inclusive community in the Halton Region for nearly 50 years, providing a variety of programs and services to immigrant and refugee communities. I have visited HMC Connections many times, and witnessed

firsthand their dedicated team of staff and volunteers working hard to ensure newcomers to Canada can participate as full and active members of the community.”



September 15 was the **UN International Day for Democracy**. Every year people around the world come together to celebrate the International Day of Democracy. This special day was established by the UN General Assembly in 2007 to promote and strengthen democratic values.

In his statement Prime Minister Trudeau said, “Democracy didn’t happen by accident, and it won’t endure without effort. Canada will always stand up for democracy – it’s the foundation of a future of collective security and prosperity.”

Also on **September 15**, community activist **Dave Meslin** launched a new TV series.



“Teardown: Rebuilding Democracy from the Ground Up” is a handbook of democratic solutions to energize civic engagement. It was written by author and community organizer Dave Meslin, whose resumé includes the creation of Unlock Democracy, the Grey Highlands Municipal League and the Hopeville Kite Festival, among many other ambitious initiatives.

His book has been adapted into a new 6-episode series titled **“Unrigged,”** which will air every Sunday night at 8 pm on TV Ontario (TVO). The first episode, Bloodsport , premiered on September 15. It explored the impact of polarization on our political landscape and examined how mob-driven verbal warfare and ruthless tribalism shape our discourse. The show will explore ways to transform our political environment from conflict to constructive engagement, featuring reflections from current and former politicians on their own behaviour. You can find recordings of all 6 episodes at TVO.org



On **September 17 Grandmothers Voice hosted a Full Moon Ceremony with special guest Grandmother Gail Whitlow.** Participants gathered in person at St. Paul’s United Church to honour Grandmother Moon and each other.

International Equal Pay Day, celebrated on **18 September**, represents the longstanding efforts towards the achievement of equal pay for work of equal value.



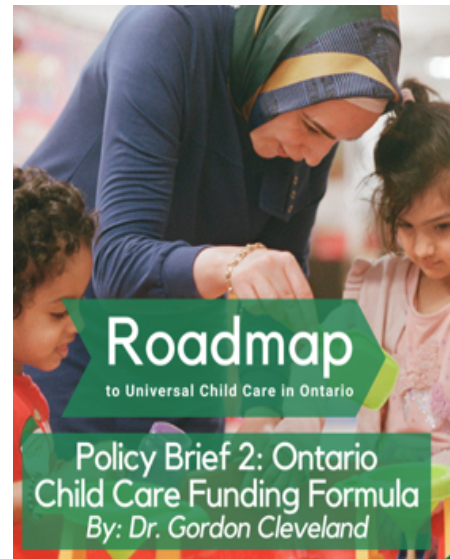
Harvesting rice by hand

It further builds on the United Nations' commitment to human rights and against all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against women and girls.

Across all regions, women are paid less than men, with the gender pay gap estimated at around 20 per cent globally. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls continue to be held back owing to the persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men, poverty and inequalities and disadvantages in access to resources and opportunities that limit women's and girls' capabilities. Progress on narrowing that gap has been slow. While equal pay for men and women has been widely endorsed, applying it in practice has been difficult.

In order to ensure that no one is left behind, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address the need to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Mainstreaming of a gender perspective is crucial in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Women, especially migrant women, are overrepresented in the informal sector, leading to low-paying, unsafe working conditions without social benefits. Women also perform three more hours of daily care work than men, including household tasks and caring for children and the elderly. The motherhood penalty exacerbates pay inequity, with working mothers facing lower wages, particularly as the number of children they have increased. Gender stereotypes, discriminatory hiring practices, and promotion decisions also contribute to pay inequalities.



On **September 19** **The Association of Early Childhood Educators** organised an on-line webinar to discuss the ramifications of the new Ontario Childcare Funding Formula. Designed to cope with some of the effects of the increase in demand for childcare, this new formula is complex and raises more questions than it resolves! The Halton Network of providers is working to sort them out.

Recordings of the webinar should be available soon.

MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos wrote:



“I joined Minister Charmaine Williams to announce that the Ontario government is investing up to \$1.18 million over three years through the **Women’s Economic Security Program** to support the Centre for Skills Development’s Enhanced

General Carpentry training program for low-income women in Burlington. This funding is part of our government's larger commitment, with up to \$26.7 million invested over three years in 25 local programs across the province. These initiatives are empowering women by providing the skills, knowledge, and experience they need to secure jobs, start businesses, and achieve financial independence."

The Women's Economic Security Program offers training in four streams: skilled trades, entrepreneurship, information technology, and general employment. To help remove barriers to participating, the training programs also include additional supports such as providing meals throughout the training day, transportation to and from training, and support finding childcare. Through the training program, women who have experienced or are at risk of intimate partner violence can also access wraparound supports, including referrals to mental health and well-being supports, counselling, housing, and legal support. Women interested in the program can visit Ontario.ca/women."



Ontario Investing in New Supports to Address Gender-based Violence

The Ontario government has launched 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



On **September 20th** the **2024 “1 Million March for Children”** held rallies across the province, demonstrating against trans and LGBTQ rights. They failed to show up at 2225 Trafalgar Road in Oakville but 5 enthusiastic counter-protesters from pflag were there to make their presence felt.



From 4-30 to 8 pm on **September 20th**, HEDR and Grandmothers Voice combined to host an **Indigenous Music and Art Community event** at Burlington Music Centre. “We will listen to the Echoes of wisdom from our Ancestors to amplify their teachings and messages of healing. By honouring the past, celebrating the present, and embracing these lessons, we will build a future grounded in reconciliation and unity. This festival featured Indigenous musicians, speakers, and wisdom keepers and vendors, each bringing their unique voice and perspective.



On **September 25 SAVIS of Halton held their 35th Annual General Meeting** at their Rebecca Street Offices. SAVIS provides free, confidential, and non-judgmental 24 hour support to all survivors of violence including female-identified, male-identified, and members of the transgender community. They advocate against violence in the community at large and promote prevention through community education.

September 29



There were 5 workshops to choose from. You could try your hand at African Beats, where a choreographer led an easy dance routine. You could line dance together to intense African Beats. You could register the right answers on your mobile phone for African Trivia. You could learn about African Foods including herbs, spices and new recipes. You could taste Ethiopian coffee at the free coffee bar. You could discover the versatility of African Textiles, and you could learn how we can help conserve Africa's Animals.

In addition to the workshops, there were two exceptional African roots musical groups, Nostalgia Egyptian Music and Okavango African Orchestra. This is more than just music; it's a celebration of the vibrant tapestry that is African heritage, expressed through the universal language of harmony.

September 30 was National Day for Truth and Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day.

Why wear an Orange Shirt ?- Phyllis Webstad was just six years old when she wore a new orange shirt that her grandmother gifted her for her first day of residential school. On arrival, she was stripped of all her clothes and belongings, including the orange shirt. Inspired by Phyllis' story, the colour orange has become a unifying symbol for the 'Every Child Matters' movement which commemorates the children abused and murdered in the residential school system and honours the survivors.

We can also listen to and Support Residential School Survivors , join a local Truth and Reconciliation Day Event, or watch the film ""Sugarcane,"" which offers a powerful tribute to the resilience of First Nations people and their way of life, and opened in cinemas across Canada, starting September 27.



'Our knowledge was meant for everyone': A Halton partnership opens the door to deeper understanding and conversations of Indigenous culture

Grandmother's Voice and Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable leaders Jody Harbour and Daven Seebarran are excited about collaborating on educational opportunities ahead.



At the heart of this union – at least in the short-term – is a **seven-session 'Our Circles for Change' workshop** that begins this fall and will be open to all HEDR members.

The course – the creation of which was made possible through funding from Halton Region – will take a deep dive into the significance and understanding of land acknowledgements. This, Harbour said, is a cornerstone of Indigenous education and key tool in the move toward ultimate reconciliation

October is Women's History Month

Phenomenal Woman by *Maya Angelou*

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies.
When I try to show them
I say,
It's in the arch of my back
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.
I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man, the fellows stand
Or fall down on their knees
Then they swarm around me ,
A hive of honey bees.
I say,
It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch My inner mystery
They say they still can't see
I say,
It's in the reach of my arms
The sun of my smile
The ride of my breasts
The grace of my style.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.
Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing
It ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
The palm of my hand,
The need of my care,
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Watch out for AWHsome in November 2024

