



Newsletter of Advancement of Women Halton

January 2025

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.



Happy New Year!

A Message from the Chair

January 2025 will be dramatic. There may be elections called, and there will be the fallout of other elections that will affect us – perhaps badly.

This is when we come together to support each other and the community, to yell and scream, if necessary, but to be there for each other, and to be there to tell those who are listening we are also listening and watching. We care, we care a lot!

Our Democracy Café held the end of November was successful for a first one, so we will have more.

We will continue to ask questions and seek support for Early Learning and Child Care within Halton.

We will very definitely continue to learn more about affordable housing, to question where supportive housing is, and of course to question the use of the notwithstanding clause.

We will support plans to challenge political violence especially when it is directed at female candidates.

We will support our agencies and organizations who are a part of us, supporting them to provide the services and actions that we need to live as a strong community.

Welcome to 2025. It might be a bumpy ride.

Teri



Grandmother's Voice

Jody Harbour gave the Opening Address at the Intimate Partner Violence event. It was a very beautiful and impactful event. Great job Chondrena and committee!

Below is the full text of Jody Harbours opening address.

[Truth with Reconciliation](#)
[Conference Opening Address](#)
awhalton.com

Early in December we received the news that Dennis Windego's Training was accredited by the Indigenous Certification Board of Canada. This is so impactful and important for Indigenous Health in Ontario

GMV is applying for a grant for Palliative Care for Indigenous people. This will be our first large application to provide knowledge of Indigenous practices and ethics to front line workers, hospitals and hospices. We have confirmed several partners within the Halton region to provide letters of support as well as committed to working alongside us to roll out the training

Our next conference date is February 25th & 26th and the Grandmothers Curriculum is going to be leading the conference along with Allen Sutherland



GASP members continue to work on many fronts.:- **COP 29 Results** GASP is a member of the Climate Action Network - Réseau Action Climat, a national coalition. - and members were disappointed that developed countries have not come through with the level of finance needed to help developing countries drastically reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Where is the climate justice? Every GASP Campaign will have “**election readiness**” as a goal for 2025. There will be a GASP Climate Plan Request for every political party prior to Election. GASP hopes people will support and promote the efforts of Co-operate for Canada, i.e. promote electoral cooperation among the progressive political parties The **Ontario Watch Campaign** is following gravel mining, HWY #413, an Ontario Bill to allow returns of beverage containers & receive deposits, and the Canadian Environmental Law Association’s ‘Water Drop’ concern about lead in our drinking water. The **Pension** team covers all pensions including the Canadian Pension Plan; all with the same concern, “ending investment in fossil fuels.”



The Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton (CCAHA) kicked off 2024 with renewed energy and a continued commitment to its four pillars: Education, Culture, Community, and Harmony. We hosted a standout kickoff event featuring performances and presentations by Juno and Gemini award-winner Jully Black, and talented performers Anthony Sherwood, Geri Defoe, the ArtHouse Children’s Choir, Girl Power’d Dancers, and the CCAH Steel Band. A highlight Steelpan and

Parang event was the CCAH Steel Band's collaboration with the Oakville Wind Orchestra for free performances at Bronte Heritage Waterfront Park, made possible by the Bronte BIA.

We engaged with schools in Halton through programs such as music performances, cultural mentorship and youth empowerment sessions, culinary workshops, and film screenings. Our annual **May Soirée** was a celebration of Caribbean culture featuring keynote speaker Hon. Greg Fergus, Speaker of the House of Commons, and musical performances by two-time Juno award winner Sonia Collymore. For our annual **Emancipation Day Celebrations**, we started with the unveiling of a plaque honoring CCAH founders Icilda Bailey and Veronica Tyrrell at our Community and Harmony Garden. The celebrations continued with a picnic at Oakville Museum, featuring live performances, family activities, and we hosted our walking and bike tours exploring Oakville's Black history. We ended the summer with our annual celebration of **Veronica Tyrrell Day** at the park dedicated in her name. CCAH Board President, Sheldon Williams, and Board Vice President, Richard Pinnock, presented the Oakville Hospital Foundation with a cheque for \$25,000 as part of our longstanding relationship and pledge with the Oakville Hospital Foundation.

Two Board Members were recipients of the King Charles III Coronation Medal for significant contributions to Canada through community service and achievements: Richard Pinnock, was recognized by Pam Damoff, MP Oakville North-Burlington, and Pam Chase was recognized by Karina Gould, MP Burlington. We saw two Board Members retire in June: Andrew Tyrrell and Katherine Dottin-Adams—a heartfelt thank you for your years of dedicated service! In August, we marked a pivotal moment in CCAH's history as we officially welcomed our first Executive Director, Dionne Downer, bringing her visionary leadership to our organization. (and AWH was delighted to welcome Dionne too!)



Sadly, Patrick Parsons died on November 20, 2024.

Born on October 26, 1958, in Trinidad and Tobago, Patrick discovered his love for dance at a young age. From his first steps, it was clear that he was destined for the stage. His passion for movement and expression led him to Toronto, Canada to pursue his artistic education. Patrick trained at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, Ryerson University, George Brown College, and the University of Toronto. He held a master's degree in dance Ethnology from York University. Patrick was the Founder of Ballet Creole, as well as its Executive/Artistic/Music Director and main choreographer.

Some of our longstanding community members may remember Mr. Parsons as he taught dance classes for CCAH years ago. One of the last collaborations with Ballet Creole and CCAH was for the launch of Black History Month in 2018. May his spirit continue to dance, inspire, and innovate, forever leaving an imprint on the world.

December 2 Ubuntu Vigil Orange the World

Marianne Waraich wrote: Burlington had its GBV vigil yesterday at 5pm at city hall. Elizabeth Rennie, Ruth Levkoe and I attended. The Mayor, a police inspector, representatives of Halton Women's Place, and 2 high school students spoke eloquently on gender-based violence. The Different Drummer provided a display, and we all joined in singing We Shall Overcome.



Sydney Alexandra for Burlington Local News described the scene.

Burlington City Hall became a beacon of hope and unity as members of the community gathered for a moving candlelight vigil hosted by Burlington Ubuntu Grandwomen. The event was organized to raise awareness about violence against women, with the theme, “Safe, Anywhere, Anytime,” as part of the Orange the World campaign, a global initiative dedicated to ending gender-based violence. The soft glow of candlelight on the cold, dark Monday night illuminated the faces of those gathered, serving as a poignant reminder of the community’s strength and resilience.

Burlington Mayor Marianne Meed Ward made heartfelt remarks, highlighting the importance of addressing gender-based violence at every level of society. Music played a significant role in fostering a sense of unity throughout the vigil. Rev. Dave Ogilvie of Burlington Baptist Church offered a series of uplifting songs. Inspector Crystal Dodds of the Halton Regional Police Service oversees critical units such as the Intimate Partner Violence Unit, the Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Unit, and the Human Trafficking Unit. She delivered an astonishing account of the prevalence of gender-based violence in the region. 3,600 cases related to intimate partner violence, leading to more than 1,700 charges, this year alone.

The evening's most poignant moment came when a high school student stepped forward to bravely share her personal story of being assaulted at a young age. Her testimony shed light on the pervasiveness of violence and the urgent need for societal change.

Wrapping up the event, Linda Rafuse, chair of Ubuntu Grandwomen, emphasized the importance of using one's voice to advocate for change. Quoting Nobel Peace Prize recipient Malala Yousafzai, she said: "We realize the importance of our voices only when we are silenced...When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful."

The flicker of candles in the night symbolized hope, resilience, and a future free from violence — a future where women can live with dignity and without fear.

December 4

GENEVA— Senior executives signed the Business Leaders' Pledge on Disability-Inclusive Sustainability Practices put forward by the ILO Global Business and Disability Network. Thereby they are becoming the first companies to commit to increased efforts to make disability inclusion an integral part of their sustainability work, including their Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) efforts and reporting.

By signing the Pledge during the opening of the Network's two-day "From Margin to Mainstream: Disability in Business" conference on Wednesday, the CEOs committed their enterprises to *"promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities through the perspective of ESG and other sustainability frameworks"* Peggy Russell attended the conference...



Disability Without Poverty writes: The long-awaited updated regulations for the CDB are expected to be published in the Canada Gazette Part II in the New Year. We are expecting to see the recommendations from the unanimous passing of the 20th report from the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills, Social Development, and the Status of Persons with Disabilities reflected in these regulations.

This includes benefit adequacy, inclusive accessibility and protection against claw backs.

We also continue to monitor the progress of MP Collins' *Bill C-403*, which proposes automatic qualification for provincial disability benefit recipients.

December 4 Oakville & District Labour Council Education Forum Galaxy 707



AWH's own **Maureen Weinberger** and **Dr Joey Edwardh**, who planned and hosted the event



Chandra Pasma MP,
NDP education critic

Amy Collard
Chair HDSB

Aislin Clancy MPP
Green Party

Not shown is **Indira Naidoo Harris**, former Minister of Education, now AVP, Diversity & Human Rights · University of Guelph. Ms Harris struggled through a snowstorm to make it to the forum, and arrived after the photo had been taken. **Robbie Brydon**, HDSB Trustee, was in the audience.

We heard from the panelists about the worsening current state of education at elementary, secondary and tertiary levels, due to chronic underfunding. Problems they mentioned included : the funding formula, (which is based on a head count and does not feature pupils with disabilities, autistic students, those diagnosed with behaviour problems or non-English speakers, all of whom need additional resources); hidden costs to school boards like EI and health contributions and transportation; violence in schools and student mental health . At university level, the loss of income from overseas students has been devastating. Education is seen by the Ontario government as a “Drain on finances” when it should be regarded as an investment. They urged us to raise our voices, whether in unions (which have had success lately in fighting the Ford government) or in social media, or among friends. We must call attention to the failure of the provincial government to live up to their undertaking to provide education for all and urge politicians to treat education as an investment in Ontario’s future.

December 10, Human Rights Day

Human Rights Day is observed annually around the world on 10 December. It commemorates the anniversary of one of the world's most groundbreaking global pledges: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). This landmark document enshrines the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

The Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 and sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

As a “common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations”, the UDHR is a global blueprint for international, national, and local laws and policies and a bedrock of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

It is available in 577 languages, from Abkhaz to Zulu, making the UDHR the most translated document in the world.

2024 Theme: Our Rights, Our Future, Right Now.

This year’s theme of Human Rights Day is a call to acknowledge the importance and relevance of human rights in our everyday lives. We have an opportunity to change perceptions by speaking up against hate speech, correcting misinformation and countering disinformation. This is the time to mobilize action to reinvigorate a global movement for human rights.



For Human Rights Day, adolescent girls led a UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)-supported online event earlier today, taking participants on a journey through Mali, Mauritania and Niger to discover their realities and struggles in the Sahel region of Africa



December 12 Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness

The Government of Ontario tabled Bill 242, the **Safer Municipalities Act**.

The proposed legislation outlines a clear shift toward an enforcement-based responses to homelessness in Ontario, focusing on increased trespassing enforcement, along with expanded police authority and increased fines and incarceration for public drug use.

Ontario cannot enforce its way out of homelessness, and this response will lead to more people dying from overdoses in alleyways, and homelessness will spread further into all corners of communities.

The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness strongly opposes the proposed legislation and enforcement-led approaches to encampments and homelessness – approaches we know to be ineffective, costly and cruel. The only way to solve homelessness is with homes.

The \$75-million investment announced today in housing, shelter, and the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit are a recognition that we need to invest in housing to solve the homelessness crisis.

Ontarians need their government to rapidly and significantly scale up investments in affordable housing and housing supports to ensure everyone has a place to call home.

December 12 David and Joyce Milgaard's Law

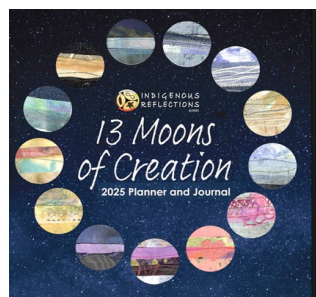
MP Pam Damoff noted:

After passing through Parliament on **December 12**, I'm thrilled to hear that Bill C-40, known as the David and Joyce Milgaard's Law, was given royal assent on Monday and is now law. The bill will introduce amendments to establish an independent commission dedicated to reviewing miscarriage of justice applications. The law is named after David Milgaard, who served 23 years in jail for a crime he did not commit.

Former Minister of Justice, the Honourable David Lametti, worked tirelessly to introduce this Bill and I am so proud of the work our government has done to make miscarriage of justice reviews more efficient.



December 16



Presented with Grandmother's Voice.

LIVING BY THE LUNAR CYCLE

To prepare for the year ahead with intention and connection we joined Anishinaabe creative and educator, Jennifer Luxmore-at Burlington Central Library, as she began to explore the 13 Moons of Creation and taught us how to incorporate these teachings into our daily life through planning and journalling.



Season's Greetings from GRAN

Looking back, it has been quite a year for our Grandmothers Advocacy Network. From your dedicated work on the Right to Food, to a wonderful *Hello Friends!* gathering in Toronto in May, to the launch of our Child Hunger Campaign this fall, and the many recent community events for #16Days of Activism, we've had an action-packed year of learning and advocacy. Thank you for all your efforts.

And we are not done! Now more than ever, our government needs to know that there is a concerned community of older women across Canada who fervently believe that Canada must do more to end child hunger.

We want to remind you of our **current postcard campaign** urging Canada to commit \$750 million to child nutrition at the Nutrition for Growth Summit taking place in March. With postal delivery resuming, please don't forget to send the ***Act Now to Feed Our Future*** postcards to your MPs. You can print your own in either **English** or **French**. (Printing instructions are available [here](#).) We still have some wiggle-room in the lead-up to the Nutrition Summit.

Together with all members of the GRAN national Steering Committee, we wish you and your family the very best over this holiday season and send our heartfelt

wishes for a peaceful and more just New Year.
GRAN Co-Chairs

"Peace in every home, every street, every village, every country. This is my dream."

- Malala Yousafzai



Marvyn Novick (1940-2016) was a prominent social policy advocate in Canada who authored major national reports on child poverty, led a pioneering study on social changes in Toronto suburbs and addressed employment, community well-being and children's life opportunities. Recently, Marvyn's former colleagues and family came together to support an anthology of this work. Thanks to our Campaign Coordinator Jen Teixeira for her hard work in bringing this anthology to life and to the Laidlaw Foundation for supporting the work.

And our own **Joey Edwardh** added:

Friends: Many of you have been aware of the work to bring Marvyn Novick's thinking and writing back into our reflections on the transformations needed in our communities and across our land. This is a gift that will help us move forward into 2025, a year that augers political, economic, social, and environmental challenges.

The Marvyn Novick Legacy Group is delighted to announce that the Marvyn Novick Anthology is finally completed! *Bringing the Ideas of Marvyn Novick to Life: An Anthology with Commentaries* can be found at our Social Commons website - <https://socialcommons.ca/category/novick-anthology/>

You will find all the elements: the Personal Reflections by family and friends, the introduction by Peter Clutterbuck and Christa Freiler, the 18 commentaries with

links to the relevant policy documents by Marvyn, and an Epilogue by Brigitte Kitchen. These elements are all in the Anthology document and are available separately on the website page that David Thornley has so beautifully set up.



December 19

Jim Stamford at the Centre for Future Work reported: **Economic Benefits of \$10-per-day National Child Care:**

Canada's new national early learning and childcare (ELCC) program is just two years old, but already the economic benefits are visible. Our Centre partnered recently with the Child Care Now coalition on a report documenting the numerous economic benefits from the plan. These include:

- 40,000 net direct new jobs in ELCC services
- Thousands more jobs in spin-off activities (in the ELCC supply chain and downstream consumer industries)
- An increase in labour force participation and full-time work for core-age female workers, amounting to 175,000 new full-time-equivalent workers
- An estimated \$32 billion in increased GDP, generating billions in additional revenue for governments

Perhaps the most striking finding: the roll-out of the new national program (with its significant stimulative impact on Canadian GDP) likely helped Canada avoid a technical recession in 2023.

Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime



The office of the ombudsperson published a new report, titled [Strengthening Access to Justice for Victims of Hate Crime in Canada](#), which included several recommendations for the government like adding femicide — murder inspired by misogyny — to the Criminal Code and implementing legal measures to combat residential school denialism.

December 20



CDH presented the latest Community Data Watch on Single Mother Families

And you can read the entire report, Single Mother Families,
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z2IMY3I6pUxd4RKQ | XEUDM3G45Oblo/view.](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z2IMY3I6pUxd4RKQ/view)



My name is Mwanaisha Shaa Milandu and I am 18 years old. I live in the village of Lusando in Mkuranga District in Tanzania with my mother and four of our

relatives. My father died when I was 14 years old and in seventh grade at Lusando primary school. I had to leave school and work to help my mother earn our daily living. I thought I had no choice or opportunities but to wait for marriage.

Nearly a year later, I got a life-changing call. I was among 10 girls who were selected to be supported by PASADA to enroll in skills training. I opted to join the tailoring course because this had been my dream for a long time. After graduation, PASADA staff and the trainer gave me an opportunity to work and earn an income while I continued learning. I have been able to buy my own sewing machine. Now I am able to support my family and myself. *(PASADA is Pastoral Activities and Services for People with AIDS in Dar Es Salaam Archdiocese).*

My wish is to be able to encourage other girls around my community by offering guidance and sharing my knowledge and skills, so that they also become self-reliant and make the right decisions in their lives.

Mwanaisha



Celebrating 10 years of 160 Girls engagement with the Kenya National Police Service (NPS); **81% of child rape victims are now getting preliminary access to justice** (i.e.: an arrest and the initiation of a prosecution), within 3 months of reporting to police (in Canada rape victims experience a 36% access to justice rate, ever).



December 22

Report from **UBI Works** The poverty-mental health spiral

The United Nations' Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and health issued a new report on the interaction between mental health and poverty.



His recommendations for government? Stop treating the mental health crisis solely as a biomedical problem. Instead, treat the determinants of poor mental health with an unconditional Basic Income.

One of the world's largest privately funded Basic Income experiments began publishing this year and its results generated quite a bit of buzz. The study was funded by the CEO of OpenAI, **Sam Altman** (he built ChatGPT).

Basic Income lets people buy back time

Single parents and younger recipients (more likely to be in school) took 2-3 hours/week away from work. ***For everyone else, there was no conclusive impact on employment.***

Ending poverty and growing the middle class

\$1,000/month *lifted virtually all single households out of poverty.* Working class families (\$30k avg income from work) got a substantial income boost.

Unlocking entrepreneurship

Recipients were more likely to report having an idea for a business, wanting to start a business in the next 5 years, and buying materials to start a business. Black entrepreneurship boosted 26%; women-led businesses by 15%.

Freedom to seek better work, take risks

Recipients were more likely to be actively searching for work, to have applied for work, and to be more selective about jobs.

Escaping abuse & having more housing options

Recipients had more freedom to leave toxic or abusive environments and to find more suitable housing. Further, for some people living in toxic or abusive environments, the cash transfers allowed them to secure healthier arrangements.

Enabling longer-term planning

There was a significant positive impact on budgeting, planning for the future, and pursuing further education.

Spending on basics & helping others

Recipients spent the majority of basic income on food, housing, transportation, and childcare. The greatest increase as a percentage of spending was on *support to others*.

Prioritizing health

Recipients showed greater use of medical/dental services and lower likelihood of skipping other bills to pay for healthcare, suggesting a greater ability to prioritize one's own health. Problematic drug and alcohol use decreased, especially among males.

More financial security and resilience

Recipients were more able to pay for an unexpected or emergency expense and had increased financial health, credit scores, and savings.

Coming soon!



WOMEN OF HALTON ACTION MOVEMENT

SAVE THE DATE



Keynote Speaker
Nicole Rakowski

**Unyielding Journey of
Overcoming Adversity**



Presents

The Dinner Party 2025

Celebrating

*International
Women's Day*

March 5, 2025

Bluewater Association for Lifelong Learning – [bluewaterlearns](https://bluewaterlearns.com)

Series on Women, Peace and Security

Jan 9th, 2025, Jacqueline O'Neil: Women, Peace and Security

Jan 16th, 2025, Bipasha Baruah: Global Trends in Women's
Employment in renewable and Clean Energy

Jan 23rd, 2025, Nargis Nehan: Situation of Women in
Afghanistan

Jan 30th, 2025, Stéphanie von Hlatky: Women, Peace and
Security at NATO

Feb 6th, 2025, Trish Meekins: Murdered and Missing Women
and Girls in Canada

Feb 13th, 2025, Francesca Dobbryn and Heather Sheldrick: How
do we promote women's peace and security in Grey Bruce?

Visit bluewaterlearns.com to purchase tickets to the complete on line series.



Heather Hendry is Tofino's poet Laureate. She welcomes first nations children to Kindergarten at Wickaninnish Community School. She recently published a little book of poems. Here is one.

Handmade Binoculars

Curling small hands into circles
He places them in front of his brown eyes
Thumbs touching

Knees rest on the low windowsill
Inches from a dead bee
Laid to rest in cobwebs

Life **outside** is busy today
He **scans from** side to side

The binoculars **pass up** to me
Crouching I look **through**

A crow and a seagull
Share the telephone wire
In conversation about the weather

A stray dog
Circles the heels of a cow
Taunting

A path of colours
Connects land to sky
The same arc
He drew that morning
Above a square and triangle
home to Mom, Dad and baby brother.

it's the rainbow
he wanted me to see
as his hands drop away from my eyes

Watch out for AWHsome in February 2025

