



*February 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.*



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## *A Message from the Chair*

2025 began with a bang.

AWH responded to the Ontario Budget with a brief outlining our demands to finally invest in our social infrastructure ,which has crumbled so badly.

We also sent a response to the editor of the Toronto Star, commenting on the article they had published in late December about the trafficking of foreign students. We pointed out the failings of this government. It has forced post-secondary institutions to rely on foreign students to make up for the province's lack of funding, to rely on high foreign fees to finance this shortfall. The government is complicit with its shoddy supervision of bogus 'colleges', its allowing the use of 'students' to fill entry level jobs and permitting large numbers of foreign students without the requisite housing.

Our current focus is on the upcoming (so unnecessary) provincial election.

We do indeed live in interesting times.

In solidarity,

*Maureen*

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At the start of the New Year



Jimmy Carter died. He served as the 39th President of the United States from 1977 to 1981. He was awarded the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize for work to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development. This was a President who will be remembered for his great integrity



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau resigned. He stepped down as Liberal leader, and prorogued Parliament as the Liberal Party of Canada embarked on the journey to replace him.

Trudeau said that he intends to resign as both Liberal leader, and prime minister, once his party “selects its next leader through a robust, nationwide, competitive process.”

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Trudeau has been the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada since 2013, and prime minister since 2015. He will be the seventh longest serving prime minister in Canadian history.

### **Trudeau's legacy**

lowered taxes to 20.5% for everyone who makes under \$100,000 a year.

- brought in policy to phase out traditional coal-fired power plants
- launched the largest conservation campaign in Canada's history, protecting 30% of lands and waters and conserving wildlife and habitats.
- lifted over a million children out of poverty with the Canada Child Benefit.
- cleaned up many water issues lifting 144 long term boil water advisories.
- legalized cannabis.
- He created a new system of non-partisan Senate appointments
- put more money into the hands of Canadians with the carbon tax rebate.
- Federal government invested in housing for low-income & vulnerable Canadians
- seniors and young children now have access to free dental care.
- got us through a pandemic and procured vaccines preventing 100,000 of thousands of deaths.
- Canadians now have the freedom to choose assisted dying.
- advanced a ban on harmful single-use plastics,.
- Helped Canadians improve the energy efficiency of their homes and reduce their energy bills by providing homeowners with grants and made interest-free loans
- Committed to ensuring 100% of vehicles sold in Canada be zero-emission by 2035 and supporting automakers and auto-workers to produce in Canada.
- Created an additional 7 new national urban parks.
- Cut taxes in half for businesses that manufacture zero- emissions products.
- Introduced tougher rules for managing chemicals that will enshrine Canadians' right to a healthy environment for the first time in our history.



We did enjoy some sunny days

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## Canadian Labour Congress

**Take action** against Violence in the Workplace

- [Call for Urgent Action to Tackle Violence and Harassment at Work](#)
- [Sexual Harassment in the Hospitality, Gaming and Airline Sectors in Canada](#)
- [Violence and Harassment Against Educators](#)
- [Turning the Page: Library Workplace Violence and Harassment](#)
- [Canadian Women Journalists Suffer Online Abuse](#)
- [Third Party Violence and Harassment](#)
- [Hands Off Pants On: Sexual Harassment in the Hospitality Industry](#)
- [Violence and Harassment in the World of Work](#)
- [Customer Abuse: The Hidden Struggles of Frontline Workers](#)
- [Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions: Violence is not part of the job.](#)
- [ILO C-190](#)
- [Fact Sheet: The Dindigul Agreement to End Gender-Based Violence and Harassment](#)
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## Is Canada Broken?

In recent years surveys have shown that Canada ranks:-

**First** in the world for Best Quality of Life, Most Transparent Government and Most Educated Population

**Second** in the world for Most Economically Stable

**Fourth** in the world for Level of Freedom

(Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands tied for first place)

And Toronto General Hospital ranked **fourth** in the world for quality health care

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Zee Hamid Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance invited **Teri Shaw Advancement of Women Halton (AWH)** to participate in a discussion in advance of the 2025 Ontario Budget

### **AWH response**

The Provincial government has asked for pre-Budget submissions from Ontarians. While we suspect that the Budget has long been finalised and this is merely lip-service to “consultation”, as a group that advocates on behalf of women, we felt we should respond.

The Provincial Government has focused on building Infrastructure, in the form of roads, bridges and housing developments.

Now we need to build some Social Infrastructure, to meet the basic needs of the people who live in Ontario.

We need a funded public housing strategy that provides affordable, accessible, geared-to-income housing and addresses on-going maintenance costs.

We need a fully funded mental health strategy that has the resources to reach out to and support citizens who are without shelter.

We need financial support for women’s shelters that offer a safe haven and security to women fleeing intimate partner violence.

We need funding for public education JK-12 that is based on the actual needs of students in classrooms, and with a plan to address the backlog of capital requirements.

We need public health care funding that includes access to primary care for all Ontarians and funds hospitals adequately .

We need to restore funding to universities and colleges so that they can deliver the high-quality education that is required for the post-industrial economy. And finally

We need a basic income that will lift Ontarians out of poverty, remove claw backs and address the special needs of persons living with disabilities.

In Canada’s most populous province, we are not satisfied with being among the very lowest in funding for health services, universities, supportive income and public-school financing.

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Burlington's Liberal MP Karina Gould announced on January 19 that she is running for the party leadership. Will she become Canada's second female Prime Minister?



## Right to Housing

At a zoom gathering on the evening of January 13, AWH members discussed how to follow up on a **housing campaign**.

They decided:

- \*CDH and partners will host a follow up zoom meeting **February 3<sup>rd</sup>** at 10 am. Please watch for the notice and sign up for that
- \*To follow up with the Manager of Housing Strategy, City of Burlington, Sarah Philips to see what has happened as a result of the November HAF forum
- \*Consider an AWH election planning team, with Housing on the agenda
- \*Consider an educational speaking role for AWH, with church groups and rate payer organisations, to promote secondary units
- \*Continue to campaign for Basic Income
- \*Campaign for building Supportive Housing with follow up – mobile health clinic – and outreach. Indwell seems to be a charity with experience in doing this. Tim Richter and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) are worth following too.

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### **Winnipeg's 30-Day Encampment Outreach Plan**

Starting this winter, the City of Winnipeg and community outreach teams to begin decommissioning encampments using a camp to housing approach.

**Step 1:** Site Identification based on the following criteria.  
Health and Safety issues, Public and Community Safety issues,

**Step 2:** Set a 30-Day Transition Period. The following work will be undertaken to transition everyone out of an encampment into housing.

#### **Step 3: Transition to Housing**

Outreach teams will work closely with people in the encampment to understand needs and offer housing and other resources, including

Access to social housing units with supports.

Funding to solve immediate barriers to housing, such as a damage deposit payment for market housing.

Access to healthcare professionals for those with severe physical or mental health issues.

#### **Step 4: Decommission and Monitoring**

Clean and decommission the encampment site, monitor the site to prevent further encampments from being established.

Assist those previously in encampments with transportation to their housing unit, heat treatment for their belongings to prevent the spread of bed bugs and other necessary supports related to their transition.

#### **Compare this with the City of Oakville plan**

Take campers into police custody

Buy them a coffee and drive them to Hamilton.

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**Good Luck Nate!**

On December 20<sup>th</sup> Nate Erskine Smith took on the new role of Housing Minister. Erskine-Smith acknowledged that he is “new and with a short runway.” But he said he is focused on making the most of that time by “explaining different programs and bringing transparency to where we’re at.”

“First, it’s currently too hard and expensive to build the homes that we need,” Erskine-Smith said. “There’s too much red tape, too much restrictive planning and zoning rules and too many administrative delays. We need to remove all barriers to let the market build and require greater density, everywhere, especially near transit and post-secondary institutions.”

In my role as housing minister, I am also focused on building on our progress in tackling the housing crisis by: Removing barriers to the market building density and supply; Doubling down on investments in affordable, supportive, and social housing and Treating housing as a home first, investment second.”

### **A battle we thought we had won...**

#### **Solitary confinement continues in federal prisons despite commitment to end it,**

*Patrick White Globe & Mail Jan 28*

More than five years after Ottawa passed legislation designed to abolish solitary confinement in penitentiaries, the practice persists throughout the federal prison system, according to an expert oversight panel. In its 12th and final report released on Monday, the 10-member panel concluded that the government needs to modify laws around prisoner isolation yet again to fully eliminate solitary confinement and other unlawful prison practices.

The fat lady didn’t sing yet, so the battle ‘aint over...

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Donald Trump took the **Presidential Oath of Office**

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."



President Trump then pardoned about 1,500 people who stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. The document also directs the U.S. attorney general to drop pending cases related to the riot.

He signed orders declaring illegal immigration at the U.S.-Mexico border a national emergency.

He revoked 78 executive actions of the previous (Biden) administration. The rescission applied to executive orders spanning from former President Joe Biden's first day in office in 2021 to as recently as last week, and covered topics from COVID relief to the promotion of clean energy industries.

He also rescinded executive orders that had promoted diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and promoted rights for LGBTQ+ people and racial minorities, fulfilling promises to curtail protections for the most marginalized Americans.

Hold on to your hats. This is going to be a bumpy ride!

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In the January on-line lecture series Women, Peace and Security we heard from

Canada's UN Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security, **Jacqueline O'Neill**, On the origins and relevance of the UN as a global movement



From **Dr Bipasha Baruah**, professor of Gender, Sexuality and Womens Studies at Western University, on Global trends in gender and work.



From **Nargis Nehan**, former Treasurer of Afghanistan and Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum, on conditions today in Afghanistan



And from **Stéfanie von Hlatky**, Canada Research Chair in Gender, Security, and the Armed Forces at Queen's University on how NATO's focus on gender equality became a planning priority.

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## Go Girls!



Authorities in South Carolina are on the search for two runaway emus named Thelma and Louise after they escaped their home.

The pair of Aussie birds escaped from their home in Loris, 160 km northeast of Charlestown, about three months ago, owner Sam Morace told CBS News.

## Health Care Rally

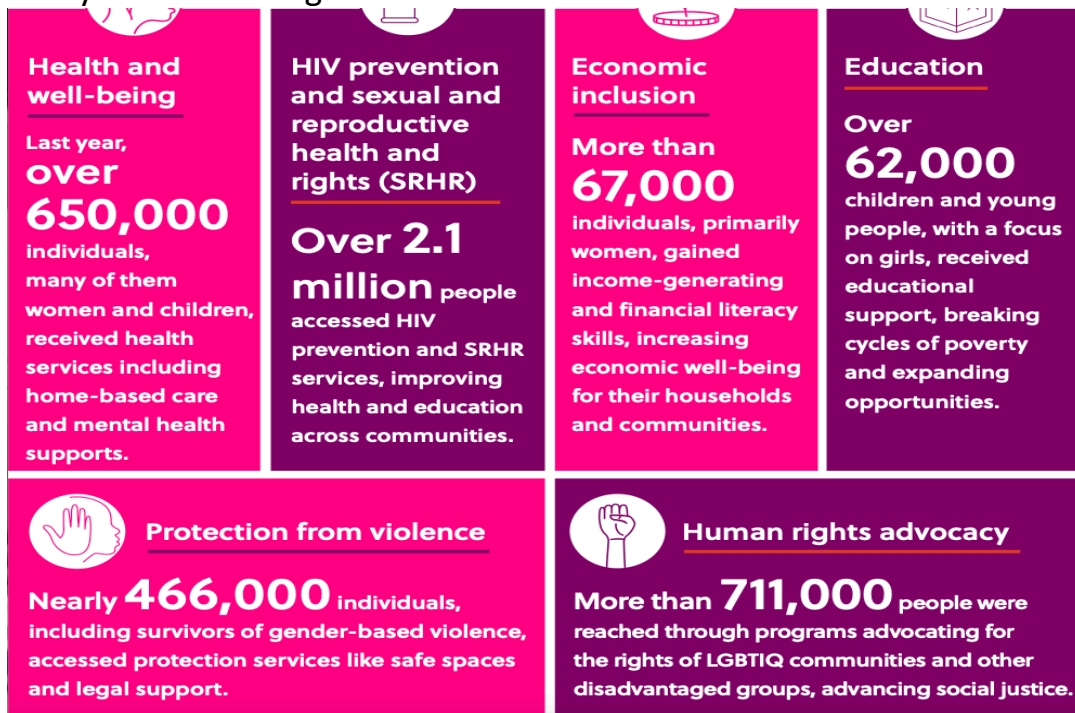
On Thursday, January 16 Ontario Health Coalition members and CUPE hospital and LTC staff together with Community activists and long-term care and hospital staff rallied to demand appropriate funding for Ontario's hospitals at provincial budget hearing at Sheraton Hamilton Hotel, 116 King St W, Hamilton, ON, the site of the provincial budget hearings



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The Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) partners with 98 community-led organizations across 14 African countries, providing flexible funding and holistic support. With strong community ties and expertise, these organisations transform lives through essential services in health, education, economic inclusion and human rights. Women are at the forefront of these efforts, driving impactful, community-centred change.



Women are not just participants but leaders of these life-changing efforts. Drawing on their experiences and insight, women shape programs to address the distinct needs of their communities.

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Effie wrote **A New Era for the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton**

It was a pleasure to meet Dione Downer, the new Executive Director of the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton! CCAH has been a cornerstone of cultural celebration and community engagement in Halton, promoting Caribbean heritage and supporting diversity through education, events, and advocacy.

A special thank you to Andrew Tyrrell for his remarkable leadership and years of collaboration with our community. His dedication has left a lasting impact, and I look forward to seeing the legacy continue to grow under Dione's leadership. Together, we will continue to celebrate and strengthen the vibrant cultural fabric of Halton.

On **Childcare**, Effie wrote:

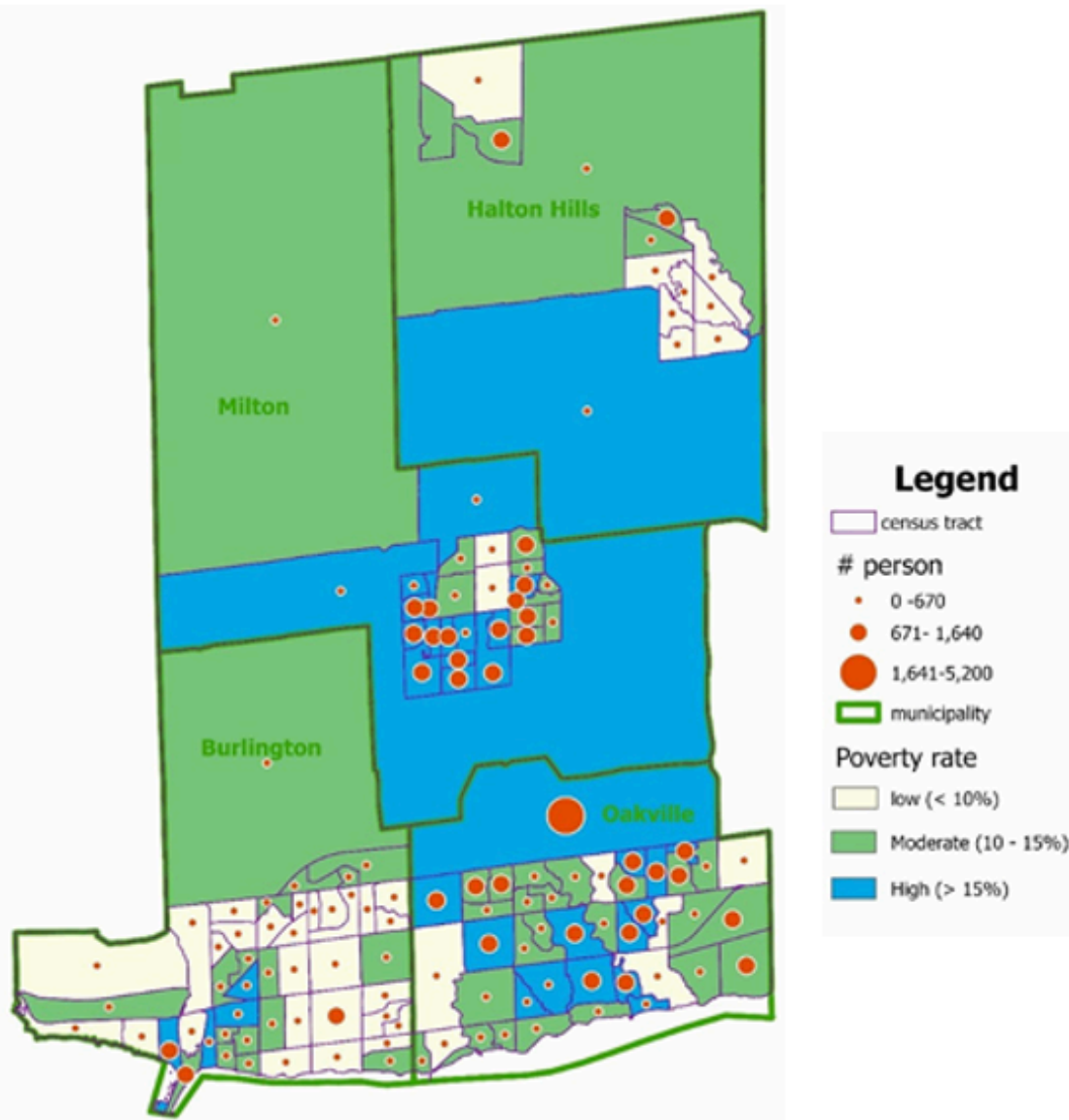


Starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, Ontario is reducing childcare fees to \$22 a day for children under six in Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) programs, saving families nearly \$300 million (provincial estimates) and bringing down fees to an average of \$19 a day.

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## CDH released their latest Community Data Watch On the Poverty Rate in Halton

Data Source: Statistics Canada, T1FF taxfiler data



Oakville experienced the largest increase in seniors living in poverty, rising from 4,140 in 2018 to 6,080 in 2022 (a 47% increase).

Burlington saw a significant rise from 2,490 in 2018 to 3,660 in 2021 but declined slightly to 3,620 in 2022.

Milton's senior poverty population grew from 2,300 in 2018 to 3,430 in 2022, with a notable jump in 2021.

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No sooner had we started to return to our regular routines than Justin Trudeau resigned, and parliament was prorogued – one of those words that we only come across one every blue moon.

This means that Parliament will not be in session, until late March. At that point, with a new leader of the Liberal Party and therefore Prime Minister in place, one way or another, we are heading towards an election.

Of course, the one thing we all want to know is whether this will affect the roll out of the Canada Disability Benefit on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

If the regulations are not finalized before Parliament resumes on March 24, where the government is expected to lose a confidence vote and trigger an election, then the CDB's rollout on July 1 is in jeopardy. This would delay the much-needed benefit, putting it further out of reach for the 1.6 million Canadians with disabilities living in poverty.

That's why we're launching the **#GuaranteeTheBenefit** campaign - a united effort with our allies to urge Cabinet to finalize and publish the CDB regulations without delay - you can learn more [here](#).

Now is the time to take action. We ask all of you to contact your elected officials and implore them to use their influence to prioritize and ensure the CDB regulations are passed before Parliament is reconvened. Your voices are essential in making sure this historic benefit is not derailed.

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**Valérie André** (21 April 1922 – 21 January 2025) was a veteran of the French Resistance, neurosurgeon, aviator, and the first female member of the military to achieve the rank of General Officer, in 1976, as Physician General. As a member of the military, she was not addressed as "Madame la Générale" (a term reserved for spouses of generals) but as "General".



GASP members attended a very well supported rally hosted by CORE at the Gambrel Barn, Country Heritage Park, Milton, to protect Mount Nemo and the Burlington Escarpment. (You can see the GASP signs top left) Jim Cuddy and Sarah Harmer performed, and the mayors of Milton, Burlington and Caledon spoke out against the proposed Campbellville quarry, and raised awareness about gravel mining reform .

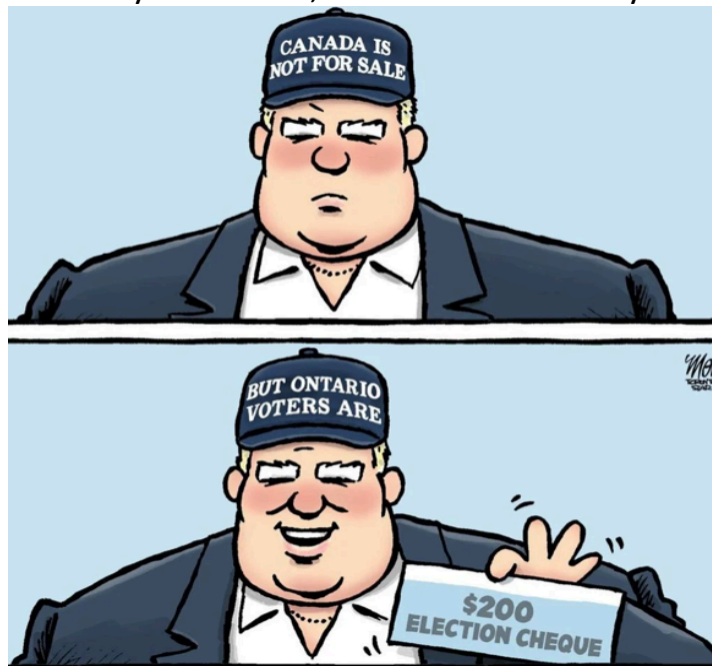
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## **Doug Ford has called a snap provincial election for February 27.**

Please don't forget that:

- Between 2021 and 2024 housing costs in Ontario increased by 23% and food costs by 24%.
- In 2018, tenants waited 40 days for a hearing at the Landlord and Tenant Board. Today the average wait is 277 days.
- One in ten people in Toronto routinely visit a food bank.
- The government has prioritized tax cuts and subsidies for corporations, totaling nearly \$10 billion annually.
- We have lower provincial government funding of hospitals in Ontario today than in any other province.
- The number of Ontarians with developmental disabilities waiting for supportive housing has grown by 10,000 since the Ford government took office.
- Ontario Disability Support Program rates have been frozen at 2018 levels
- 45% of Ontario households spend 30% or more of their total income on shelter, the highest on record across the country.
- Schools, universities, public lands and assets, and the arts, Ford is deliberately underfunding and trying to privatize them all.

From a new book, **"Against the People"**, edited by Bryan Evans and Carlo Fanelli, published by Fernwood, available in February.



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The Oakville Community Foundation will be distributing \$100,000 to four different community priorities thanks to the money raised during the **2024 GIVEOakville** campaign.

The four community priorities were identified as areas of urgent and high need in Oakville and include: Intimate Partner Violence, Feed Oakville, Mental Health Alliance, and the Urban Forest Fund.

### **Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic - \$30,000**

Intimate Partner Violence was declared an epidemic by both the Oakville and Halton councils and triggered The Foundation to invoke its Oakville Resiliency Fund. Money donated to this Fund will be distributed among: Halton Women's Place, The Women's Centre of Halton, SAVIS and Thrive Counselling.

*Many thanks to the Oakville Community Foundation*

**Save this date:**

### **CDH Follow up on National Right to Housing forum**

Join a conversation on **Monday February 3, 2025, 10 am to 11 am** Via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89829995825>

We will be focusing our conversations **on what we can do collectively** related to critical housing issues, as we anticipate the federal and possibly a provincial election in the near future.

**Please let Rishia Burke know if you plan to attend.**

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## February 3<sup>rd</sup> Launch of Black History Month

Tickets are \$15 and include the following:

- Emcee Lesley Forbes
- Keynote speech by historian and professor Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon, who will speak to her research about the histories of African Canadians
- Gospel choir Kevin Adams & Voices of Praise
- Singer Natasha Waterman
- Collaboration with CCAH Steel Band and Parang Ensemble
- Messages from community partners reflecting on our 2025 theme

[Buy BHM2025 Launch Tickets Here](#)

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March 5





March 8th

### OFL IWD 2025 LAPEL PIN, SHIRT AND POSTER



Champion the power of women's voices in democracy and celebrate the power of voting by supporting the OFL's The Power of Many: **Women Vote** campaign this International Women's Day. Wear our lapel pin and t-shirt and display our poster in solidarity and sisterhood. This campaign is about more than just merchandise - it's a movement! Women's

votes shape our communities, our workplaces, and our future. Pin, shirt, and poster are available in English and French. Place your order by January 31 to guarantee delivery in advance of International Women's Day. Visit the eStore now to get yours!

ENGLISH: <https://myunionstore.ca/pages/international-womens-day-2025>

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February 25 & 26, 2025

GRANDMOTHER'S VOICE PRESENTS A 2 DAY EVENT

# TRUTH WITH RECONCILIATION: RESPECT, RESTORE, RELEARN



FEBRUARY 25TH & 26TH | 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
THE MEETING HOUSE | OAKVILLE



RESPECTING  
INDIGENOUS VOICES



RESTORING ANCESTRAL  
KNOWLEDGE



RELEARNING TO AFFECT  
RECONCILIATION



## SPECIAL EVENT: AN EVENING WITH JODY WILSON-RAYBOULD

FEBRUARY 25TH | 5:30 - 8PM

Join us for an inspiring evening with Jody Wilson-Raybould, a prominent Indigenous leader, author, and advocate for justice and reconciliation. Her one hour long talk will be followed by a Q&A session and book signing after the program.

THIS IS INCLUDED WITH CONFERENCE TICKET.

TICKETS FOR THIS CAN BE PURCHASED SEPERATELY FOR \$49



GET TICKETS!

GRANDMOTHERSVOICE.COM



Watch out for AWHsome in March 2025

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