



**AWHsome**

**Newsletter of Advancement of Women Halton**

*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 during the previous month.*



*June 2025*

*“Working together to change the rules”*

### *Message from the Chairs*

AWH is watching the new federal government begin its mandate and parsing what the speech from the throne may mean for our future work. Provincially, we know we will continue to keep a careful eye on issues pertaining to healthcare and our concerns about how narrowly they define the economy.

This is an excerpt from a letter we sent to our MPs, drafted by Nicole Pietsch and Anne Douglas.

A strong economy isn't just about commerce and trade. For example, paid care in health and education alone is a key engine of the economy, generating at least 12% of GDP and 21% of jobs. Women are over-represented in care work and care economies, as well as unpaid care work. Although often under-valued or less visible, care work is important and supports the functioning of all the other parts of the economy. While we are pleased to see the Sectoral Table on the Care Economy, we can only hope that its recommendations, when they come, will be followed.

With this in mind, a strong economy demands that we have strong policies that support our social safety net: this includes healthcare, pharmacare, childcare, the support to those who have disabilities, the continuation of a national action plan to end gender-based violence, community services and much more.

*As Katherine Scott, CCPA wrote: "The Throne Speech upholds and reinforces the idea that economy and society are separate and distinct, that male-dominated manufacturing and natural resources drive the show, that vital social programs and community development are secondary or subservient, that fundamental issues of equality are divorced from the health of the economy.*

*Tell that to the millions of women working in Canada's care economy who've been running flat out for the last five years. Tell that to Indigenous communities waiting for the government to honour their commitments to close the infrastructure gap on reserve. Tell that to the millions of young people trying to land their first job. Tell that to people with disabilities struggling to access support to live a life of dignity."*

We have only just begun to fight.

*In solidarity, Maureen and Teri*

## The Federal Election and its impact on Women

### CRIAW statement

“With the election of a new Liberal government, led by Prime Minister Mark Carney, the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women congratulates all newly elected and returning Members of Parliament.

“Women’s votes decided the election’s outcome, according to polling on the last day of the campaign,” said CRIAW-ICREF Executive Director Jackie Neapole.

Among decided voters, 50.4% of women were voting for the Liberal Party of Canada, compared to 33.8 % of men who were voting for the Liberals, based on survey data released by Nanos on April 27, the day before the election.

“Prime Minister Mark Carney will form a new government due to the strong support of women. We now respectfully call on his new government to take three timely actions to demonstrate his commitment to women’s rights and gender equity,” said Neapole.

“First, the Prime Minister must reinstate the role of Minister of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) in his new cabinet. A commitment to advance gender equality requires focused leadership, accountability, and sustained attention, from a dedicated cabinet minister for WAGE.

“Secondly, we call on the new Carney government to fulfill the commitment made in the Fall Economic Statement of December 2024, by allocating the announced \$15 million to national women’s rights organizations to support systemic change and advance gender equality.

“Thirdly, CRIAW-ICREF requests the new government articulate a strengthened dedication to Gender Based Analysis Plus in the upcoming Speech from the Throne and relevant Ministers’ mandate letters by committing to work with feminist civil society experts in the application and evaluation of an intersectional lens across all federal departments and agencies,” added Neapole.

*Teri Shaw wrote:*

AWH sent congratulatory notes to our newly elected 2025 MPs and MPPs.

MPs:

- ◇ Hon. Karina Gould, Burlington
- ◇ Hon. Adam van Koeverden, Burlington North-Milton West, Secretary of State (Sport)

New members with this election:

- ◇ Kristina Tesser Derksen Milton East-Halton Hills South
- ◇ Sima Acan, MP Oakville West

Of special note, Halton has both MPs responsible for Foreign Affairs:

- ◇ Hon. Anita Anand, MP Oakville East, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- ◇ Hon. Michael D. Chong, MP Wellington-Halton Hills North, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs

In our letter to the MPs, we stressed the care economy and social infrastructure, that silent and essential support to other parts of the economy. We also acknowledged and thanked for the reinstatement of the Minister of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE)



MPPs:

- ◇ Natalie Pierre MPP Burlington, Parliamentary Assistant to the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions & Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Sport
- ◇ Hon. Zee Hamid, MPP Milton, Associate Solicitor General for Auto Theft and Bail Reform
- ◇ Hon Stephen Crawford, MPP Oakville, Minister of Public and Business Service
- ◇ Effie J. Triantafilopoulos, MPP Oakville North—Burlington, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
- ◇ New with this election and the youngest MPP: Joseph Racinsky MPP Wellington-Halton Hills

Our letter to the MPPs concerned the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement, and the need for Ontario to fully sign on to the new agreement. Halton is desperate for new spaces.



## Gender Based Violence

### Progress in Kenya

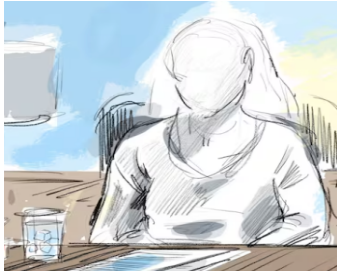


*Moments of heaviness were balanced by intentional “dance breaks” to decompress and reconnect. You can catch a glimpse of the spirit and energy in this [slideshow video](#), which captures human rights transformation in action.*



*160 Girls Prosecution Pilot Training, including the Canadian High Commissioner to Kenya, Christopher Thornley (front row, centre).*

## ***And Gender Based Violence , in Canada***



### **Sexual assault myths abound in former World Junior Hockey players sexual assault case: [Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres \(OCRCC\)](#) responds**

Sexual assault has the lowest rate of reporting to police amongst all violent crimes. Despite years of sexual violence advocacy, awareness-raising and the work of community services to support survivors, this rate hasn't changed: police-reported sexual assaults only represent about 6% of all sexual assaults in Canada.

As sexual assault survivor advocates, we often hear the question: *Why don't sexual violence survivors report? What can we do to get more survivors to report?*

The experience of a young woman – a complainant named as "E.M." in court documents, in which five former World Junior Hockey players were charged with sexual assault – is a case in point of the reasons why survivors hesitate to report. Over the last weeks and five cross-examinations in court, E.M. has faced almost every harmful and victim-blaming sexual assault myth in existence.

- Read [OCRCC's full statement here](#)

*Nicole Pietsch* Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres

## Right To Learn Afghanistan

### May 3 National Red Pashmina Walk

For the first time in our history, five of our volunteer chapters — Vancouver, Toronto, Saskatoon, Ottawa, and Peterborough — walked together in solidarity with Afghan women and girls in the National Red Pashmina Walk. More than 200 Canadians from coast to coast united under one powerful message sending a strong statement of support to Afghan women and girls who are denied the right to education. Marching in their cities and wearing red pashmina scarves, they sent a clear message: education is a right, not a privilege.





## ***Pam Damoff Named CEO of The Pearson Centre***



*The Pearson Centre has announced that Pam Damoff will join as Chief Executive Officer effective May 12, 2025. Damoff brings decades of public service and private sector experience, including 5 years as Oakville Town Councillor, 10 years as Member of Parliament for Oakville North–Burlington, and a 27-year career in financial services.*



***Thank you, Pam, for everything you have done (especially for women)***

## *Canadian Caribbean Association*



The OE Banquet and Conference Centre was packed on Saturday May 3, with steel pan music, jerk chicken and the who's who of Halton for the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton's annual May Soiree gala.

The gala each May is a fundraiser for youth programs, including summer camps and music workshops. The event featured multiple music acts, ranging from live jazz by Juno winner Eddie Bullen to the CCAH's own steel pan drum band.

The keynote speaker was historian Dr. Rosemary Sadlier - former president of Ontario Black History Society, and one of the leaders in the creation of Black History Month and Emancipation Day.



Dr. Sadlier spoke on the history of Black History Month and Emancipation Day in Canada, and her involvement in their roots. She closed by commending the work of the CCAH in Oakville and beyond: "Never underestimate the power of one person - or one organization."





Read what comes next here  
[Join the fight for the Canada we want](#)

In his victory speech, Mark Carney declared that we are at “one of those hinge moments of history,” facing changes comparable to those that followed the Second World War and the end of the Cold War. “We will need to do things previously thought impossible at speeds we haven’t seen in generations.” But what kind of change will Prime Minister Carney bring?

It will be up to all of us to find new ways to federate our forces, resist the coming attacks on working people, Indigenous rights and the climate, and forcefully put forward an alternative path that puts people and the planet before corporate profits.

### In Local News



**Ayami Sato is making history with the Maple Leafs.** The legendary pitcher represents where Canadian women’s baseball can go. Sato started in the [Toronto Maple Leafs’](#) Intercounty Baseball League home opener on Sunday afternoon, the latest stop in a pioneering career.

## May 5, Red Dress Day calls for action to end violence against Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people



**Jody Harbour of Grandmothers Voice wrote:** There is hope. But hope alone is not enough. We need action. We need Canada to implement the 231 Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into MMIWG. We need accountability from police forces, from governments, from institutions that have failed us again and again. We need real resources for our communities—not just empty promises.

And for those who are not Indigenous, there is a role for you, too. Listen to our stories. Attend the vigils. Stand beside us, not in front of us. Support Indigenous-led initiatives and organizations. Learn about our history, and then ask yourself how you can be part of our future

As well, the museum of Oakville agreed to have the beautiful garden at their site, named as a Living Monument for MMIWG2S+ Sisters In Spirit ( we will name this with our Community). Our first garden was created at Country Heritage Park in partnership with Country Heritage Park, Minnikaan, & the Catholic School Board and Sustainable Milton and community members.

Our goal is to continue to create gardens like this to bring healing to communities. We are continuing our petition for Living Monuments.

They were daughters. Sisters. Mothers. Lovers. Friends. They were sacred. And they are missed. Say their names. Carry them with you.

Speak them aloud so they are never forgotten.

Tina Fontaine (15)

Shannon Alexander (17)

Morgan Harris (39)

Loretta Saunders (26)

Marcedes Myran (26)

Cindy Gladue (36)

Rebecca Contois (24)

Patricia Carpenter (14)

Maisy Odjick (16)

Delaine Copenace (16)

These are only ten names. Ten out of thousands.

## Pathways Program

On a balmy Tuesday (May 6) at Milton's Country Heritage Park, youth enjoyed a morning of playing lacrosse, learning to hoop dance and hearing stories from Indigenous leaders.

The three groups -- ranging from grades six to eight -- got a chance to take in all these aspects of Indigenous culture in a round robin fashion.

Similar to the HCDSB's Pathways program, this style of experiential learning is meant to help students develop ways of thinking about their future.

"We firmly believe that any experience can be an informed piece of decision-making for a kid," said HCDSB Experiential Learning Consultant John Dietrich.

"A lot of our students may not come from Indigenous backgrounds, but to experience something Indigenous opens their eyes to possibilities about their future.





May 5-11, 2025 [MentalHealthWeek](#)



May 5-11, 2025 ► [MentalHealthWeek.ca](#)

**There's  
more to me.**



Look beyond the surface and see the whole person. By embracing honesty and vulnerability, we open the door to deeper connections and the mental health benefits that come with it. In doing so, we can create a ripple effect of courage and understanding across the country.

### [May 11, Happy Mother's Day from the Stephen Lewis Foundation](#)



The Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) faces significant challenges due to cuts to USAID funding, as many of the projects SLF supports are also funded by USAID. These cuts threaten to jeopardize programs focused on HIV prevention, sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, and more, potentially reversing years of progress in combating AIDS and supporting vulnerable communities.

## May 12 Golden Horseshoe GRAN webinar



After a beautiful land acknowledgement by Elizabeth Rennie, Sandy Milakovic briefly described the work of GRAN and this year's focus on food insecurity, especially for children. She then handed over the floor to Donna Slater and Dianna Williams

Dianna introduced Food for Life, a food rescue organization in Halton and Hamilton, celebrating its 30th anniversary, and discussed the growing crisis of food insecurity in Canada and Halton. The organization's mission is to rescue food and impact lives, collecting surplus perishable foods from various sources and sharing them across a network of food access points. Donna Slater discussed the impact of their programs, the challenges of sustaining them due to funding limitations, and the possibility of using gift cards to support food-insecure individuals.

Irene Turpie fielded all the questions posted in CHAT and passed them enthusiastically on to the speakers, who responded with extra details.

### Next Steps:

- ◇ Advocate for improved disability and employment supports, including enhancing the federal disability benefit and increasing unemployment insurance
- ◇ Advocate for a guaranteed livable basic income where no one falls through the cracks
- ◇ Advocate for a universal school food program
- ◇ Advocate for indigenous sovereignty
- ◇ Share information learned about food insecurity with neighbors, friends, and family to Raise awareness
- ◇ Consider volunteering for Food for Life
- ◇ Attend the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on May 28
- ◇ Reach out to local MPPs to advocate for provincial food programs for children in Ontario.



## Education: Violence in Ontario schools is at crisis level, writes Dave McGinn



Dave McGinn is a journalist with the Globe and Mail. He recently took over the education beat. “It’s like being hit with a firehose every day” he says, of the deluge of mail he receives from teachers, parents, students and advocacy groups.

“Running on fumes: violence, austerity and institutional neglect in Ontario schools” is the title of a report just released by Professor Chris Bruckert and Darby Mallory, of the University of Ottawa

A survey of 6,000 Ontario education sector workers in the 2022-23 school year found workplace violence in schools across Ontario is now so frequent that it has reached crisis levels. 95% of teachers reported experiencing at least one act of student-initiated violence

Underfunding, overcrowded classrooms, increasing student needs, lack of supports such as school psychologists, and dwindling professional health services are all to blame. The problem is compounded by food insecurity and other socio-economic stressors.

Many teachers are leaving profession because of regular violence and harassment- according to Heidi Yetman, president of the Canadian Teachers’ Federation. She notes that the violence has a great effect on learning and on the psyche of a kids in a classroom. There is a lack of resources needed to support students who are having violent outbursts or who are dysregulated.

Violence is now so normalized, it is seen as just part of being in school, says Karen Littlewood, President of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation. “Many places of business have signs saying violence, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated. Yet in schools we’re just supposed to say everything is okay. But it’s not okay. The kids are not okay, the schools are not okay. The working conditions are not okay.”

**A firehose is meant to extinguish flames. We must reverse the effects of austerity and institutional neglect if school violence is to be extinguished.**

## May 13, PM Carney announces new cabinet

Among them are 4 women we should know



Rechie Valdez  
Minister WAGE



Marjorie Michel  
Minister Health



Mandy Gull-Masty  
Minister Indigenous Services



Patty Hajdu  
Minister Jobs and Families

So, it seems the new Prime Minister was listening to some of CRIAW's concerns  
(though not all of them, judging by the throne speech)

## May 15 Moosehide Campaign

Moose Hide Campaign Day is a day of ceremony where all Canadians are called to join together to take a stand against violence towards women and children and to take practical steps for our collective journey of reconciliation.

It is a Canadian, Indigenous-led grassroots movement focused on ending violence against women and children. It was founded in 2011 by Raven Lacerte and her father, Paul Lacerte, and has grown into a national movement. The campaign uses a moose hide pin as a symbol of commitment to honor, respect, and protect women and children, and to speak out against violence.

Every year there are over 60,000 physical or sexual assaults against women in BC

One in three women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime (Stats Canada, 2006)

In 2014 there was a daily average of 7,969 women and children staying in shelters across Canada because it was not safe at home (Statistics Canada)

There were 1,181 cases of missing or murdered Aboriginal women in Canada between 1980 and 2012, according to the RCMP, with BC recording more than any other province (Native Women's Association of Canada, 2010). However, according to grassroots organizations the number is much higher, closer to 4,000

Domestic violence is preventable.

1 IN 2 Half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16

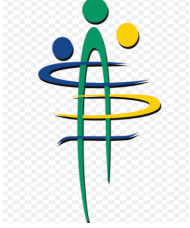
3X Spousal violence of Indigenous women is three times higher than non-Indigenous women

EVERY 2.5 DAYS A woman or girl is murdered every two and a half days in Canada

6X Indigenous women are killed at six times the rate of non-Indigenous women

At the heart of the moosehide campaign lies a simple but powerful medicine: a small square of moosehide. These pins spark conversations, carry stories and represent a personal commitment to ending violence against women and children.





**May 16 CDH Near and Dear Project**, Building Strengths, Addressing Gaps: A Community Profile of Action. Read the full report here:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DSkijbOqygOw30LhH4ZEU\\_SrobBw1OVHu/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DSkijbOqygOw30LhH4ZEU_SrobBw1OVHu/view).

CDH shared an in-depth report on the assets and strengths to be found in Acton and how these can be optimized and put to best use.

**Quotes from the "Voices of Lived Experience" another CDH project.**

At Community Circles during 2024/25, observers recorded conversations in shelters for the homeless and noted the calls for action.

**Wesley Family Shelter, Burlington**

*"I just want to live somewhere normal. Where I can cook for myself. Where people can come and see me. People called me "Momma". I was there for people, and they counted on me -that was my Superpower. But now I need support."*

**Churchill Neighbourhood Centre, Oakville**

*"We are the unwilling. Led by the unqualified. We have been doing the unbelievable for so long. With so little. That now we attempt the impossible with nothing."*

**Out of the Cold, Knox Presbyterian, Georgetown**

*"We need accessible public transit within and between municipalities in North Halton. We need more overnight warming centres during the winter months. Leaders and decision makers should make more effort to meet people where they're at, especially those most deeply impacted by the housing crisis."*

**Kerr Street Mission, Oakville**

*"You get discharged from healthcare onto the street. We need experience of navigating systems and the spaces between. Less research – more action! We need supported housing."*

## Disability without Poverty



DWP congratulates Prime Minister Mark Carney and the Liberal Party on their election victory, but we are deeply alarmed that the 27 percent of Canadians who are disabled now find themselves without a dedicated champion at the Cabinet table. Removing the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities signals that our community can be folded into “Jobs & Families” without focused leadership - an assumption we reject.

People with disabilities are ready to collaborate to build a stronger, more inclusive Canada which is only possible by centering our lived experience and ensuring financial security.

DWP will press the Prime Minister’s Office, Minister Champagne (Finance), Minister Hajdu (Jobs & Families), and Secretary Long (CRA) to deliver:

1. Swift passage of the promised Income Tax Act amendments so the CDB is fully income-exempt.
2. A meaningful increase to the benefit amount aligned with Canada’s Official Poverty Line.
3. Streamlined eligibility that does not leave thousands behind because of the DTC.
4. Robust federal-provincial agreements preventing claw backs.

**Peggy Russell sponsored a petition for a Disability Commissioner. Sign below!**

### **House of Commons Petitions**

This is to inform you that petition e-6488 , which you have supported, has been published and is [open for signature](#).



## Halton MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos wrote



"This week, Sylvia Jones, the Minister of Health introduced the *Primary Care Act, 2025* in the Ontario Legislature, a bold step forward in our government's commitment to ensuring every Ontarian has access to a family doctor or care team. This legislation builds on historic investments that will directly benefit communities like Oakville North Burlington.

With \$1.8 billion in funding for over 300 new primary care teams, and \$300 million to launch 17 new teaching clinics, we're expanding access to care while training the next generation of health professionals. Programs like the Learn and Stay Grant will help recruit family doctors to communities across Ontario, while new nurse practitioner-led clinics and enhanced digital tools will make it easier to book appointments and access services. With nearly 100,000 new nurses and over 15,000 doctors added since 2018, our government is delivering real, lasting improvements in healthcare, right here in Oakville North Burlington and across the province."



"I joined Women's Social and Employment Opportunities Minister Charmaine Williams and Burlington MPP Natalie Pierre at the Halton Women's Place to announce more than \$876,000 in funding for the Haven to Home project. This Ontario government grant supports the partnership of Home Suite Hope and Halton Women's Place to assist 33 families to transition into stable housing. This vital funding will help ensure these women and children can recover, rebuild and thrive."

**Thanks Effie, this is the social infrastructure Ontario needs.**

## GRAN Update

**Across Canada GRAN groups focus on 5 campaigns.**

**Child Hunger Campaign** – Vancouver GRANS hosted an excellent interactive workshop held in early May on Ending Poverty Together. There is a one-page info sheet, *A Better World Starts with Canada*, created by Results Canada about the value of international assistance.

**Climate Justice Campaign** - A recently published Save the Children report entitled, “Born into the Climate Crisis 2. An Unprecedented Life: Protecting Children's Rights in a Changing Climate” details the impact of climate change.

**Education Watch** - Expanding access to water, sanitation and hygiene services is vital. Reducing waterborne diseases and maintaining hygiene are key. Improving the proximity of water sources to homes will reduce gender-based violence risks. There are crucial links between water and school attendance.

**Health** -The Global Fund and access to quality healthcare and affordable medicines continues to be a focus for all GRANS

**Mining Justice** – Canadian companies in Chile, Argentina and Guatemala are impinging on the water, territorial and autonomy rights of indigenous peoples in their search for rare earth minerals. In the words of François Philippe Champagne, then Minister of Foreign Affairs: *“To fly the maple leaf means being associated with a set of values. It is an extraordinary brand to have in the world, but it also comes with a set of responsibilities.”* **We must work to ensure that Canadian companies operating abroad represent our values for human rights and the environment, and that they are held accountable when they don’t!**



Take some time to watch the documentary film on YouTube, “Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai. “ Ms. Maathai was a Kenyan social, environmental, and political activist who founded the Green Belt Movement, an environmental non-governmental organization focused on planting trees, conservation, and women’s rights. The video offers moving testimony to an incredible leader.

## Child Care

### **‘Nowhere to go’: Halton urges province to boost \$10-a-day daycare funding.** *Bambang Sadewo, Oakville News*

An Oakville councillor is speaking up at regional council, hoping direct advocacy will help make the hope of \$10/day childcare a reality sooner rather than later.

With parents across Halton struggling to find affordable childcare, regional officials are calling on the province to increase funding for the \$10-a-day daycare program, warning that the current limits are leaving many families without options.

According to a staff report, only 347 new child-care spaces under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program are being funded through 2026, a number set by the province two years ago and unchanged since.

Yet demand is soaring. A recent call for applications drew interests from 55 local child-care operators proposing a total of 5,300 spaces.

Despite repeated appeals, Halton was notified by the province on March 31 that no additional spaces would be approved.

“We get emails from worried single moms and single dads who have nowhere to go,” said [Milton Councillor Sameera Ali](#). “Milton has over 142,000 residents and just 3,937 daycare spots. In 2021, our zero-to-four population was 9,000. The disparity is right there in the numbers.”

Alex Sarchuk, Halton’s commissioner of social and community services, explained that the funding for the CWELCC program flows from the federal government to the province, which then allocates it to municipalities like Halton.

With the current agreement set to expire next year, “The federal government has signalled that there will be a renewal of the federal-provincial agreement,” Sarchuk said, though the details are still being worked out between Ottawa and Queen’s Park. In the meantime, he added, Halton is doing what it can with limited resources — but the solution lies with provincial decision-makers.

“We do recognize the needs of families in Milton,” he said. “But continued growth is not possible unless the province allows more spaces.”



Halton is calling for increased provincial funding for \$10-a-day childcare.

Currently, families enrolled in the program pay no more than \$22 per day for childcare. Roughly 84 per cent of licensed centres and home child-care agencies in Halton are enrolled in the program.

Following the province's introduction of a new cost-based funding model earlier this year, four for-profit operators in Halton withdrew from the program. Together, they operated eight centres — four in Milton, three in Burlington and one in Oakville — representing 753 spaces.

The region is now working to reallocate those spaces to other licensed providers, but officials said the system is already stretched thin.

Regional council ultimately endorsed a staff recommendation to formally request more CWELCC funding from the Ontario Ministry of Education and to reassess Halton's space allocation. They also approved moving \$100,000 — originally budgeted for 2026 — to update the region's childcare plan this year.

Still, some councillors argued that letters and formal requests aren't getting through.

Oakville Councillor Janet Haslett-Theall encouraged her colleagues to consider more direct advocacy, including face-to-face meetings with decision-makers in Toronto and Ottawa.

"Every time we write a letter... it's in another stack of letters," she said. "If there's an opportunity to join and for others to raise this as a higher priority, I think it's important that we do so. The numbers speak for themselves."

## Lei, Laugh, and Learn



On May 22, 2025, we hosted a fun and immersive Hawaiian-themed event at HMC Connections!

20 volunteers teamed up to explore Hawaiian traditions, geography, and cultural connections between Canada and Hawaii. They got hands-on with hula dancing, lei-making, and a Hawaiian-themed quiz that tested their knowledge while strengthening teamwork.

With team leaders and interactive discussions, this event was a fantastic blend of learning, leadership, and community engagement!

A huge thank you to our amazing volunteers for making this event so special. Stay tuned for more opportunities with HMC Connections!

*Daryna Bulana Community Connections Youth Specialist*

## Education May 26

*Rob Ferguson, Toronto Star*

Ontario schools are getting a 3.2 per cent core funding increase to \$30.3 billion and a warning to spend it wisely — not on questionable trips like buying school art in Italy, as four Brantford-area Catholic school trustees recently did. The money comes with marching orders at a time when some school boards are considering cuts to balance their budgets.

“I have been clear with school boards across the province that we expect every dollar to be spent directly on supporting students, parents and teachers,” Education Minister Paul Calandra said in a statement Friday, as boards across the province were told how much to expect for the school year starting in September.

“I will be relentless in holding school boards accountable,” Calandra added, noting they can expect the government to bring in “enhanced governance measures” soon allowing him to respond quickly on matters of public concern.

The increase to \$30.3 billion is “a step in the right direction” but individual school boards will need to review what their allotments mean in terms of the programs and services they are hoping to provide, said the Ontario Public School Boards Association.



## **GASP : Environment**

Grandmothers Act to Save the Planet focused this month on a phone blast to the office of the Ontario Premier, outlining [Ten key reasons to say 'No!' to Bill 5](#), the omnibus bill that will override environmental protections in favour of new development. The Ontario government Bill 5 guts environmental protection, and introduces “law free” zones. Thanks to GASP and to an NDP filibuster, the bill has not yet passed.

### **Retired Teachers of Ontario/Enseignant(e)s Retraites de l'Ontario**

have also been active on the same file

RTOERO has submitted a formal response to Bill 5, the proposed [Special Economic Zones Act, 2025](#). Our submission was one of 363 received by the Ontario government during the consultation period. In our response, we expressed concern that fast-tracking approvals for infrastructure projects could weaken environmental protections and limit public oversight.

Economic growth must not come at the expense of safeguards that protect our environment, ecosystems, and endangered species.

As a trusted voice, we believe environmental responsibility and public accountability must remain central to policy decisions.

We encourage you to read our [response to the consultation](#).

Jacqueline Asselin, Chair of the Political Advocacy Committee (PAC), has also shared the following article for further context: [Mining claims in Ring of Fire](#).

If PAC coordinators are planning to meet with their local MPPs, we encourage you to raise Bill 5 as part of a broader conversation about environmental stewardship and the need for maintaining strong public oversight.

## Obituary



In 1975 Susan Brownmiller published, “Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape”, which documented the roots, prevalence and politics of rape. She died this month, aged 90.

While activists of the early twentieth century focused on voting rights, the second wave of feminism transformed conversations about sex, marriage, reproductive rights, workplace harassment and domestic violence. A newspaper reporter once shouted at her, “You have no right to disturb my mind like this!”

She joined the Congress of Racial Equality in 1960 and four years later was among the Freedom Summer volunteers who went to Mississippi to help registers Blacks to vote. In the 1970s she helped found the New York chapter of Women Against Pornography .

She was always controversial, and not one to just agree with the popular issue of the day. Lately, she lamented the petty divisions that caused the movement’s decline, but she still remembered her earlier years as a rare and precious chapter.

“When such coming together takes place, when the vision is clear and the sisterhood is powerful, mountains are moved, and the human landscape is changed forever. Of course, it is wildly unrealistic to speak in one voice for half the human race, yet that is what feminism always attempts to do and must do, and that is what Women’s Liberation did do, with astounding success, in our time.”

*Obituary by Hillel Italie*

## Coming Soon

Celebrate Caribbean culture and music at our annual spring concert. We will be entertained by our best music program students and instructors from our Steelpan and Parang classes, along with our CCAH Steelband performance group in the black box theatre on Sunday, **June 8th** at 1:30pm. Email [info@ccah.ca](mailto:info@ccah.ca) to be a volunteer or to sponsor the event. [Purchase your ticket](#) with a \$5 donation to CCAH children and youth programming.



## HEDR Pride Gala & Soiree

June 26, 2025, 9.00am to 4.00 pm Art Gallery of Burlington

Join us for the 3rd Annual HEDR Pride Gala & Soiree, an unforgettable evening celebrating diversity, inclusion, and the power of community. The event will feature Lolita Banana and Lady Kero from Drag Race Mexico who will lead a discussion on gender diversity and HIV advocacy.



## A Midsummer's Dream

**Thursday, June 26 | 6:00 – 9:00 pm | Paletta Mansion, Burlington**

*Join us for our third Midsummer's Dream Soiree, a bohemian-inspired outdoor experience to support the advancement and empowerment of women in Halton. You'll enjoy a candlelit summer solstice, snacking on charcuterie, sipping a signature cocktail, and bidding on amazing silent auction items, all in the ambiance of a Midsummer's Dream at the beautiful Paletta Mansion in Burlington.*

