

## **YWCA CANADA OUR HISTORY**

1870

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- Agnes Blizzard organizes the first Canadian YWCA in two rented rooms in Saint John, New Brunswick. Other associations are quickly established: Toronto - 1873, Montreal - 1874, Quebec City and Halifax - 1875.

1874

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- Lending libraries are established in YWCAs of Montreal and Quebec City, before public libraries opened.

1875

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- Halifax YWCA opens home for delinquent girls where custodial care and training are provided.
- Montreal YWCA offers nurses training classes, they are the first agency in Montreal to do so.

1884

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- Toronto, Montreal and Hamilton YWCAs teach phonography, stenography and typing to women before Business Colleges and Department of Education classes are considered – and during a time when these were considered non traditional trades, too physically demanding for women.

1886

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- First Student YWCA formed at Albert College, Belleville, Ontario.

1887

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- First Travellers' Aid work started by Quebec City YWCA.

1892

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- Ottawa YWCA opens first School of Cookery in Canada. In 1898, there were 312 women enrolled.

1893

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- Adelaide Hoodless is instrumental in organizing the YWCA of/du Canada; first annual meeting in Ottawa, January 23, 1895. In a later presidential address, Adelaide Hoodless challenges that “We will be the greatest and strongest group of young women ever formed. I mean of women, by women and for women.”

1894

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- School of Domestic Science opens at the Hamilton YWCA, the first of its kind in Canada. Adelaide Hoodless and the Hamilton YWCA are instrumental in having domestic science integrated into the Ontario public school system.

1895

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- YWCA of/du Canada becomes the fifth national association to affiliate with the World YWCA.

1898

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- “Beau Tax” instituted by Toronto YWCA for young men visiting young ladies at the residence, a \$0.25 fee for chat in the open lounge; for a visit in the greater privacy of the parlour \$0.50.

1904

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- Susan Little becomes first General Secretary, YWCA of/du Canada she emphasizes that the YWCA should work with young women, not for them.

1932

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- Montreal YWCA conducts first course for unemployed domestics, and certifies 162 women as skilled household helpers.

1933

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- First training course is held for 18 YWCA Physical Education Directors.
- Counselling is introduced as a new field of YWCA work.

1937

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- Synchronized swimming is introduced in Canada by the Peterborough Association.

1944

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- 38 Hostess Houses and 7 Hostess Rooms were established by YWCAs across Canada to serve soldiers and their families during World War II.

1951

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- Twenty-one YWCAs have active Public Affairs Committees centring on concerns about roles of women.

1953

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- First Take-A-Break (TAB) program is introduced in the Toronto YWCA. By 1958, YWCAs in 25 cities in Canada offer TAB to 1,800 women.

1957

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- YWCA of/du Canada receives Henry Tory Marshall Award from Canadian Association for Adult Education for making the most significant contribution to the Adult Education field in Canada.

1965

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- International Training Institute jointly sponsored by YWCAs of Canada and U.S.A. – 48 participants from 35 countries.
- National research study on “The YWCA – its role in relation to the serious personal problems of girls and women.”

1969

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- YWCA of/du Canada makes submission to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women calling for more and better child care services, improved education and training for women, enforcement of maintenance orders and much more.

1970

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- 100th anniversary of the founding of first YWCA in Canada, Saint John, New Brunswick.

1981

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- The YWCA joins the historic struggle for the inclusion of a women’s equality provision in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

1982

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- Peterborough YWCA publishes Fresh Start – a publication for women in abusive situations – the copyright of which is later transferred to the National Office; the book is then translated into several languages and tens of thousands of copies are sold.

1983

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- YWCA of/du Canada launches national Fitness Leadership Certification Program.

1988

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- YWCA of/du Canada launches national Aquafitness Leadership Certification Program.
- YWCA of/du Canada Operational Mission Statement is adopted, confirming leadership by women.

1989

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- The YWCA's Strategic Plan is adopted at National Convention in Regina, with a focus on program development.

1990

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- First National Data Collection initiative is launched and work begins to update the logo with a goal of common visual identity for marketing purposes.

1991

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- Pilot program of the YWCA of/du Canada Training Institute with the following courses being offered: Fundraising I; Financial Management Seminar III; Housing, Shelters and Residences; Human Resource Management I; Introduction to Program Management; Presidents' Course; Trainer of Trainers – Section I.
- The YWCA movement's long record of services and advocacy for survivors of violence is recognized at a National press conference announcing a three-year initiative with Health and Welfare Canada to increase community awareness about family violence: The Community Action of Violence Against Women project (CAVAW).
- The new national logo is introduced which graphically represents the organization's commitment to the holistic development of all women, families and communities. The logo is a combination of three open triangles, symbolizing openness and inclusivity and balance of mind, body and spirit.
- Sixteen Canadian delegates attend World Council in Norway meeting 600 women from 80 countries.

1992

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- The first National Leadership Conference is held in Ottawa and the YWCA of/du Canada launches its Centennial Celebrations at the Museum of Civilization.

1993

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- Canada Post issues a stamp of Adelaide Hoodless commemorating the founding of the YWCA of/du Canada.

1994

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- The 1995-2000 Strategic Plan is adopted at AMM 1995. Core values of A Women's Perspective, Difference and Diversity, The Whole Person, Community Mindedness, and Global Interdependence receive universal endorsement.

1995

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- 12 Canadian delegates attend World Council in Seoul, Korea.

- The YWCA of/du Canada Board of Directors develop a new policy model of governance.
- The YWCA of/du Canada adopts a new mission statement at AMM 1995: A Voice for Equality ... A Strong Voice for Women.
- The YWCA of/du Canada begins its work on Anti-Racism Organizational Change.

1996

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- The YWCA of/du Canada introduces to its Member Associations [The Week Without Violence™](#). The awareness campaign is a nationwide effort to unite all Canadians in finding solutions against violence and for safer communities.

1997

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- The YWCA of/du Canada with the YMCA-YWCA of/d'Ottawa-Carleton as the Lead Association launches "Playing with Rainbows" – a play therapy program for at-risk refugee children.
- The YWCA of/du Canada completes a reorganization and restructuring of its operations.

1998

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- The YWCA creates the Peer Support System – a national system in which Associations provide services and support to one another.

1999

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- With financial support from Health Canada, the YWCA of/du Canada with the YMCA-YWCA of Greater Victoria as the Lead Association develops Pathway to Gender Equity, a resource for youth-serving organizations to help more girls and young women become physically active.
- The YWCA of/du Canada, in partnership with Heritage Canada and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, launches the stapan-Canadian awareness campaign Racism – Stop it!
- The 4th annual Week Without Violence is held with Member Associations and hundreds of community organizations taking part across the country.
- 11 delegates attend the World YWCA Council Meeting in Cairo. A Canadian delegate is elected as one of the Vice Presidents of the World Executive Committee.

2000

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- The YWCA of/du Canada plays an active role in the 2000 Ottawa Women's March and joins a delegation of women's organizations to lobby the Canadian government for a response to 13 urgent demands.
- The YWCA of/du Canada holds its 5th annual [Week Without Violence™](#), reaching 7,000,000 Canadians and launches the Week Without Violence Website [www.weekwithoutviolence.ca](http://www.weekwithoutviolence.ca) with a Tool Kit and an Events Calendar.

- The YWCA of/du Canada and its Member Associations work to press the federal and provincial governments for an Early Childhood Development agreement. Along with ten other organizations, the YWCA of/du Canada forms a coalition and launches the Sign On for Canada's Kids campaign.
- The YWCA of/du Canada adopts a new set of strategic directions for 2000-2003 with continued focus on advocating for the economic independence and security of women and girls, and advocating against violence against women and children in Canada.

2002

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- The YWCA adopts a new positioning – YWCA Canada | A Turning Point for Women

2003

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- YWCA Canada begins a multi-year project to develop effective practices and models for emergency shelters delivering service to women fleeing violence. This is the first initiative of its kind in Canada. It is funded by Status of Women Canada, the Department of Justice and the Homelessness Secretariat.
- YWCA commits to a woman-focused organization and women leadership.

2004

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- YWCA Canada launches a new Television Public Service Announcement campaign to raise awareness around the issue of domestic violence.
- YWCA Canada, in partnership with HRDC, launches a project to create a community-crafted blueprint for the delivery of comprehensive, integrated early learning and care services. It will be a tool for policy makers, experts and community activists.

2005

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- YWCA completes a multi-year study on the feasibility of a national childcare program, *Building a Community Architecture for Early Childhood Learning and Care*.
- YWCA pilots *GirlSpace* with seven Member Associations, offering extra-curricular leadership, empowerment and self esteem programming to girls.

2006

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- YWCA celebrates the 10th anniversary of *Week Without Violence*™.

2007

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- YWCA releases critical national study, *Effective Practices in Sheltering Women Leaving Violence in Intimate Relationships*.
- YWCA extends services as part of its National Extension Plan, working with the Baffin Region Agvik Society, the Qimaavik Women's Crisis Shelter and Victims' Services in Iqaluit.

- YWCA [GirlSpace](#) is expanded to twenty Member Associations across the country.
- Twenty Canadian delegates attend the 26<sup>th</sup> YWCA World Council in Nairobi, along with the concurrent International Women's Summit focused on female-initiated responses to AIDS.

2008

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- YWCA Canada's study [Beyond Shelter Walls](#), works to create system change to keep women out of the cycle of abuse.

2009

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- The [Rose Campaign to End Violence Against Women and Girls](#) is re-launched as an annual national advocacy campaign, along with a viral website [www.rosecampaign.ca](http://www.rosecampaign.ca).
- The [YWCA Canada Report on the Status of Women and Girls](#) is issued prior to the 2008 federal election, painting a disturbing picture of women's equality in Canada.
- YWCA GirlSpace national leadership retreat in Orillia, Ontario brings together 100 girls from across the country. [www.ywcagirlspace.ca](http://www.ywcagirlspace.ca) is launched.
- YWCA launches [Life Beyond Shelter: Toward Coordinated Public Policies for Women's Safety and Violence Prevention](#), holds lobby session with women with lived experience of violence on Parliament Hill.

2010

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- YWCA Canada with The White Ribbon Campaign launch *Rose Campaign National Action Day*. People were encouraged to reach out to their Members of Parliament to discuss the impacts of violence against women and homelessness and urge to establish a National Housing Strategy for women.
- YWCA Canada launches and celebrates the 1500<sup>th</sup> download of its *Safety Siren app*. By pressing the emergency button or shaking the phone, the app sends an emergency SOS email and automatically phones a friend when you are in an unsafe situation, displaying your location on a map and geo-connecting you to over 250+ resource and crisis centres across Canada.
- YWCA Canada launches *Living Beyond Shelter—Videos for Change*. Rose Campaign celebrated International Women's Day with advocacy videos on Violence against Women and an action message to Members of Parliament.

2011

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- YWCA Canada receives the inaugural *Mary Robinson Award for Young Women's Leadership in Human Rights*. This award recognized YWCA Canada's GirlSpace, Power of Being a Girl and Young Women's Leadership Miles Programs.
- World Council in Zurich

2012

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- YWCA Canada launches *Y Act Up*, a civic engagement and leadership program for young women between 16 and 29 years of age. This program provides young women with opportunities to enhance their leadership skills.
- YWCA Canada creates *Think Big, Start Small* campaign to encourage young women to use their voices and work toward social change.
- YWCA Canada produces a *Youth Civic Engagement toolkit* that offers information on leadership, inspiring stories of young activists, creative activities and an introduction to key issues young women care about.
- YWCA Canada's Safety Siren App for iPhone receives the *Avon Foundation's Women Communications Award for Innovation*.

#### 2013

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- YWCA Canada launches a social media campaign for *A Week Without Violence* where Canadians are invited to download banners and graphics from [www.weekwithoutviolence.ca](http://www.weekwithoutviolence.ca) and encourage friends, family and followers to commit random acts of kindness.
- YWCA Canada in association with the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies and Canada without Poverty-Advocacy Network unveils *Homes for Women*, a broad-based, long-term, national campaign to prevent, reduce and eventually end women's homelessness.
- YWCA Canada makes a commitment to Reconciliation, noting that the vision today is one of women and girls empowered in a safe and equitable society and this includes First Nation, Métis and Inuit women.

#### 2014

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- YWCA Canada adopts a new national policy on Prostitution, Sex Work and Women's Safety. Supporting the safety and freedom from violence and harassment of all women, including those who participate in consensual commercial sex work.
- YWCA Canada's Rose Campaign launches *Light the Night against Violence* to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the L'École Polytechnique massacre on December 6, 1989. 25 iconic buildings, bridges and monuments were lit in red to draw attention to the need for action on violence against women and girls.
- YWCA Canada launches its #NOTokay initiative, a social media campaign asking the public to call it out when images, messages and actions promote violence against women. [www.notokay.ca](http://www.notokay.ca) included a series of short promotional videos and materials available to the public.
- YWCA Canada, the Native Women's Association of Canada and Oxfam Canada ask Federal Leaders if they are *Up for Debate*, calling for a federal election debate focused on women's rights.
- YWCA Canada launches a legal information resource for Violence Services. [www.vawlawinfo.ca](http://www.vawlawinfo.ca) focuses on Access to Justice for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Women.



- YWCA Canada releases a study entitled [Saying Yes: Effective Practices for Sheltering Abused Women with Mental Health and Addiction Issues](#), which documents research into changes adopted by violence against women shelters and transition houses to provide wider access for this population of abused women, and reduce their risk of homelessness.
- YWCA Canada launches Empezar de Neuvo a Spanish-language guidebook for women fleeing violence, translated and adapted from successful English and French resources Fresh Start and Nouveau Départ, this resource contains relevant information from women with lived experience, service providers and community partners.

#### 2015

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- YWCA Canada with the Native Women's Association of Canada and the 4Rs Youth Movement present at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women 59 Parallel Event *Leading Peaceful Revolution: Indigenous Women at Beijing 20+*.
- Over 120 young women between 18-25 years of age from across the country gather for YWCA Canada's [Think Big! Lead Now! Young Women's National Leadership Summit](#) in Muskoka, Ontario.
- World Council in Bangkok

#### 2016

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- YWCA Canada launches [#NeverBlameTheVictim](#) to kick off the annual Rose Campaign, focusing on shifting the blame in cases of sexual assault.
- As part of #NeverBlameTheVictim YWCA Canada with Juniper Park/TBWA hold a pop-up art installation termed *Blamé* that mimics a Fashion and Lifestyle brand; to challenge the idea that clothing equals culpability.
- YWCA Canada and Facebook Canada co-host From Selfies to Self-Care: Resources for a Safer Digital World as part of the Project Shift initiative. A panel discussion was held as well as the launch of the [#PressPaws On Cyberviolence video](#) and the [Rights Guide for Girls, Young Women & Gender Nonconforming Youth](#).
- Rick Mercer, Television Personality, Comedian & Author teams up with YWCA Canada to support our work in a [Public Service Announcement](#).

#### 2017

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- YWCA Canada hosts [National Young Women's Leadership Summit](#) bringing young women from across the country together to network, meet inspiring leaders, participate in interactive skill-building workshops and celebrate the contribution women have made in shaping Canada.
- YWCA Canada and MediaSmarts launch [A Guide for Trusted Adults](#), A women-centered digital literacy resource to help adults support girls and young women experiencing cyberviolence in a compassionate and non-judgemental way.
- YWCA Canada issues a statement of solidarity with Muslim Communities in Québec City.