YWCA Canada COVID-19 Emergency Response

YWCA Canada responded swiftly to COVID-19, in lobbying the federal government and the corporate sector. We hosted town halls, sourced personal protective equipment, and in-kind support for meals and transportation. Here is a quick snapshot of this work:

- Partnered with Global Medic to distribute hand sanitizer, face masks and hygiene kits for service users to 29 Member Associations.
- Called on the federal government to support the charitable and non-profit sector with a $10 billion Sector Stabilization Fund.
- Secured a $265,000 in-kind donation from Uber Canada for member associations to support women and families with meals, rides and deliveries.
- Advocated for federal government funding for violence against women services.
- Hosted 3 town halls: Gender Equity During the Pandemic, COVID-19 Community Response – Dispatches from the Frontlines, Care During a Pandemic – A Mother’s Day Panel (May 7).
- Launched an Emergency COVID-19 Emergency & Community Recovery Fund to support Member Associations.
A Message from Karen Gilmore, Board Chair and Maya Roy, Chief Executive Officer

YWCA\text-emphasis{s} have joined forces to weather critical situations many times in the past, during World Wars, the 1918 pandemic, and global recessions. The organization’s leaders were ahead of their time, responding and considering transformation at every turn. Our resiliency as a movement allows us to stand in our own power as we move into our 150th year.

As we look back, we know the women whose shoulders on whom we stand made difficult decisions, consulted stakeholders, and raised their voices to ensure the best for the women and families they served, their volunteers, and the community.

Early in 2020, we made the decision to postpone our 150th celebration plans due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As we look forward, YWCA Canada shifted to represent our local member associations by advocating for our sector as an essential service across government tables. We mobilized to bring together our stakeholders and donors to help us keep the doors open and the lights on for women, girls, gender diverse people, and their families. Like many YWCA leaders before us, we creatively adapted and shifted to ensure that we will lead resilient organizations, moving YWCAs to the other side of this crisis, not only surviving, but thriving.

On March 8, 2020, YWCA Canada launched our new brand tagline: \textit{National Advocacy. Community Action. Une voix nationale. Des actions locales}. Our brand is not just our logo; it is our movement’s culture, our strategic direction, our engagement with the community, and our commitment to serving.

Through this report we share the roots of YWCAs work in advocacy and community action, report on current initiatives and share how we will continue to move this work forward with you, our partners, stakeholders, donors, and member associations.

With gratitude, we recognize the commitment of our staff, board of directors, volunteers, partners, and donors. Your support allows us to make the impact we do and to be the leading voice for women and girls in Canada.
Since its inception, the YWCA has been active on women’s rights. In 1901, we set sights on changing pay inequity and poverty rates for women. During the 1950s, 21 YWCAs had active Public Affairs committees, concerned about the gender impacts of Bill of Rights for Canada, Employment Standards, racial discrimination, and calling for the revision of the Indian Act. At Y Teen conferences, youth were trained and discussed public affairs, organizing to engage in every aspect of life.

In 2019, YWCA Canada set out to develop a unifying tagline as part of the 150th anniversary year. We reimagined a refreshed brand through consultation with donors, service users, CEOs/EDs, boards, and funders. Members told us they wanted a tagline to ignite conversations and highlight YWCA systems change: National Advocacy. Community Action.

A strength of our national advocacy is informed and strengthened by Member Associations that exist in nine provinces and two territories. In 2019, YWCA campaigns resulted in petitions being signed by over 12,000 Canadians. We push our advocacy work forward, building partnerships, using data and stories of women and their families to inform decision makers, and the public through policy submissions and social media.

“Because we have a collective national voice for making changes all the way down to individual communities. We have One voice no matter where we live.”

– respondent to YWCA new tagline survey

We launched our Kids Talk – Video Series. Engaging little humans in big policy conversations. Our Prime Minister edition had 10,000 views and tagged incoming MPs to open a new session of Parliament:

youtube.com/watch?v=3h-DYA3sQzw&t=
Early in 2020, we were preparing a range of digital advocacy campaigns for the year when our work shifted to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Through this time, we have engaged at national tables to ensure that an intersectional gender lens remains central to recovery efforts.

**Bill C-5**

YWCA called on supporters to make it safe for survivors of sexual assault to come before the courts.

While 1 in 3 women will experience sexual violence in their lifetime, only 1 in 10 women report it. For every 1,000 sexual assaults that take place in Canada—only 3 perpetrators are convicted. Society holds deeply ingrained myths and stereotypes about sexual assault, including judges and the legal system. Survivors are skeptical of engaging with a system that produces bias and harm.

Our advocacy work does not happen in a silo, we move this work forward with you. Thanks to our supporters for sharing our materials on social media, signing petitions, and sending letters to their MPs. Your voice is critical as we advocate for policies that bring us closer to economic and social justice for women, girls and other equity seeking communities.

To inform voters and to make an impact on YWCAs priority issues, we released a series of policy backgrounders with statistics, talking points, and myth busters on Gender Based Violence and Housing and Homelessness.

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**Centering women’s voices in decision making**

1887 First Travellers’ Aid initiative started by Quebec City YWCA.

1889 YWCA of/du Canada becomes the fifth national association to affiliate with the World YWCA.

1892 Ottawa YWCA opened a School of Cookery. In 1898, there were 312 women enrolled.

1893 Adelaide Hoodless organized the YWCA of/du Canada; first annual meeting in Ottawa, January 23, 1895.

1894 The School of Domestic Science opened at the Hamilton YWCA. Adelaide Hoodless and the Hamilton YWCA are instrumental in having domestic science integrated into the Ontario public school system.
COMMUNITY ACTION

then

YWCA represent an enduring collective effort to transform our communities. For over 150 years, local associations have addressed urgent needs of the most vulnerable in our communities. From providing accommodation to young women heading into their first jobs in the city, offering counselling to survivors of intimate partner violence, to providing employment training, YWCA have remained responsive and relevant in changing times.

now

YWCA are on the cutting edge of supporting digital literacy, and research to support labour market access for vulnerable women, connecting families to the Canada Learning Bond and marginalized women experiencing oppression.

It takes a village: connecting families to savings for education

With funding from the Omega Foundation, in 2019, YWCA Canada launched the Accelerator Project. Eight Member Associations (YWCA Cambridge, Halifax, Lethbridge & District, Metro Vancouver, Muskoka, Saskatoon, St. John’s and YMCA-YWCA Vancouver Island) participated in this pilot to support 77 families in accessing the Canada Learning Bond, to build savings for their children’s education.

130 applications for the Canada Learning Bond
130 children close to an RESP
Up to $260K in education savings for children
77 families received financial incentives through the Accelerator Project

DigitalSmarts

As we move our lives online, digital literacy has become a necessary tool for education, employment, civic participation, and even health and wellness. Given the importance of digital literacy to underrepresented populations, YWCA Canada and MediaSmarts have partnered to develop and deliver a digital literacy skills program. Funded by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, DigitalSmarts is a four-year program.

Through DigitalSmarts, local YWCA provide free, easily accessible and supportive digital literacy training that meet the specific needs of participants from various vulnerable populations.

The program will train YWCA trainers who will train facilitators in their own communities using tools developed by MediaSmarts. Get a taste of the curriculum modules and facilitation guide here.

In the first year of training, we have already trained 369 people with the support of YWCA Community Muskoka, Halifax, Hamilton, Lethbridge & District, Prince Albert, Community and Thompson.

“The workshops helped me become more knowledgeable about digital literacy and keeping myself and family safe online. It helped me to start a conversation about privacy and what I could do to take a more proactive approach.”

– YWCA service user

1898  "Beau Tax" instituted by Toronto YWCA for young men visiting young ladies at the residence, a $0.25 fee.
1932  Montreal YWCA conducted the first course for unemployed domestics, and certifies 162 women as skilled household helpers.
1933  First training course held for 18 YWCA Physical Education Directors. Counselling is introduced as a new field of YWCA work.
1944  45 Hostess Rooms established by YWCA across Canada to serve soldiers and their families during World War II.
1937  Synchronized swimming introduced by the Peterborough Association.
In Good Company: Connecting women to job coaching & training

In 2019, YWCA Canada launched two new programs to advance women’s economic empowerment. In Good Company is a two-year project funded by the RBC Foundation aimed to address these challenges. It focuses on women’s economic empowerment, helping to move them towards a sustainable livelihood. Participating member associations include: Y des Femmes de Montréal, YWCA Calgary, YWCA Halifax, YWCA Metro Vancouver and YWCA Toronto.

The three main focus areas of the program include: preparing young women and women to be job ready through training and capacity building, building community awareness around changing attitudes and addressing barriers for women and young women, particularly around entering the workforce and changing attitudes of business leaders and decision makers.

Reimagining Economic Security with a Gender Lens

YWCA have supported women to access to jobs, training programs and on their journey to return to work. For the past 150 years we have designed innovative approaches to address systemic gender imbalances, we have also provided space to build connections and, strong relationships for the participants of programs.

In the spring of 2019, YWCA launched a pan-Canadian research project that will see us continue down this path to identify promising practices to increase women’s access to the labour market for the new economy.

1953
First Take-A-Break (TAB) program introduced in the Toronto YWCA. By 1958, YWCAs in 25 cities in Canada offered TAB to 1,800 women.

1969
YWCA of/du Canada lobbied the Royal Commission on the Status of Women calling for more child care services, improved education and training for women & enforcement of maintenance orders.

1951
21 YWCAs had active Public Affairs Committees for advocacy.

1965
International Training Institute sponsored by YWCA Canada & U.S.A. — 48 leaders from 35 countries.
National research study launched “The YWCA — its role in relation to the Serious Personal Problems of Girls and Women.”

1981
The YWCA joined the historic struggle for the inclusion of a women’s equality provision in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
COMMUNITY ACTION CONTINUED

Born to be Bold: Research for Labour Market Access

Born to be Bold: Measuring success for women’s access to the labour market is a three-year research and knowledge mobilization project funded by the Government of Canada. The research is focused on creating systemic change for women’s equitable access to the labour market.

Through this project, we are supporting vulnerable women and uncovering the best practices to help employers to break down barriers. We spoke with the following YWCAs and their program participants to shape a women-centred approach to connecting women to jobs: YWCA’s Calgary, Halifax, Metro Vancouver, Moncton, Montreal, NWT, Regina, Sudbury, and Toronto. Each YWCA received funding to test these practices.

Moving from commitment to action requires education and the participation of engaged partners from the corporate sector and beyond. We welcome opportunities to share this work and to move forward with you to implement best practices across all sectors so that women can access the labour market.

If you are interested in learning more about this work email projects@ywcacanada.ca

"Access to gainful employment doesn’t come down to just education and employment experience, but access to safe and secure housing, mental health, childcare, transportation, etc. We need to step away from a narrow view of employment is education. Consider that the current structures weren’t built for women, so we are asking them to fit into a mould that wasn’t built for them, rather than changing the structures.”

– Shiva Mazrouei, Research Officer, YWCA Canada

In the 1900s, YWCAs noted the “crying need” for leadership training. YWCAs in different regions created intensive leadership experiences for young women in week-long programs that covered topics such as parliamentary procedure and meeting facilitation.

YWCA 150 Years Building Community
facebook.com/ywcacanada/videos/503532773880825/

then

1982
Peterborough YWCA published Fresh Start — a publication for women in abusive situations — thousands of copies sold.

1988
YWCA of/du Canada Operational Mission Statement is adopted, confirming leadership by women for women.

1991
Pilot program of the YWCA of/du Canada Training Institute with courses in fundraising, HR and board governance.

The new national logo is introduced. The logo is a combination of three open triangles, symbolizing openness, inclusivity and balance of mind, body and spirit.

now

1983
YWCA of/du Canada launched the National Fitness Leadership Certification Program.

1990
First National Data Collection initiative is launched.

1993
Canada Post issues a stamp of Adelaide Hoodless commemorating the founding of the YWCA of/du Canada.
Think Big! Lead Now! Young Women’s Leadership Program

We brought 120 young women from across the country together for the three-day immersive leadership experience portion of the Think Big! Lead Now! Young Women’s National Leadership Program from January 16 to 19, 2020.

Grounded in intersectional feminism and social justice, inspiring and engaged young women and nonbinary youth 18 to 25 years of age participated in skill-building workshops. Dynamic keynotes speakers who identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Colour offered sessions on youth engagement, bystander intervention, and body confidence. A panel featuring young activists from around the country was most popular.

Supported by RBC Foundation, the program also includes an e-learning component, that features online workshops and Facebook Live sessions on skills such as developing your personal brand, financial literacy, grant writing and board governance.

“I’ve gotten solid knowledge in areas that I didn’t have before (ex. Financial Literacy) and have found a community of people in various stages in their leadership journey whom I can connect with at any given time.”

– Leadership program participant

THINK BIG! LEAD NOW! YOUNG WOMEN’S NATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

FUNDERS
Canadian Heritage / Patrimoine canadien
RBC Foundation

SPONSORS
Canadian North
CUPE National / Le SCFP national
Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario
The AIR MILES® Reward Program
Shoppers Drug Mart Life Foundation
Unifor Social Justice Fund
VIA Rail Canada

SUPPORTERS
Aeroplan Miles Donors (23)
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Edgewell Personal Care
George H. Stedman Foundation
Ingenium Group Inc.
JLL: Women In Tech
McCall MacBain Foundation
Penguin Random House Canada
Reitmans Canada Ltd.
S.M. Blair Family Foundation
The Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company
Voyages Transat

Think Big! Lead Now! National Leadership Program Reflections - In Conversation with Aniqah Zowmi

youtube.com/watch?v=2NMck9IGQkg&t facebook.com/watch/?v=2090176794460527

Aniqah Zowmi highlights how she navigates leadership spaces to be an effective change maker.

To date 1500 youth have participated in various sessions or viewed recordings.
YWCA Canada is a member association of the World YWCA federation, a global movement working for women’s empowerment, leadership and rights in more than 100 countries and 20,000 local communities. Through international cooperation work, YWCA Canada extends our mission to build women’s strength and foster equality beyond our borders. This year, staff and board members from Canada had connected with our sisters from other associations to address gender inequality through visits at the quadrennial YWCA World Council in South Africa.

Think Global, Act Local: YWCA International Cooperation

Representatives from 71 Member Associations convened in Johannesburg, South Africa for the 29th World Council. Over six days close to 400 delegates participated in a business meeting, workshops, consultations, and action forums. Thematic sessions included: young women transforming power structures for gender equality, intergenerational dialogues and climate change with skill-building workshops flowing from these sessions.

YWCA Canada put forward three candidates to the board, Jamie Medicine Crane for president, Brittany Tibbo, as a young woman candidate and Kate Nelischer and Lynne Kent for the Nominations Committee. Jamie was re-elected to the Board as a Vice President. Brittany Tibbo was elected as the young woman in the North American region. We are grateful for Katie Ungard, who completed her term on the national board and proudly represented us as the Governance Chair.

The Canadian delegation, mounted The REDress Project, created by artist Jamie Black, the installation raises awareness to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Through this installation, YWCA Canada stands in solidarity with our Indigenous sisters to draw attention to the gendered and racialized nature of violent crimes against Indigenous women.

| 2012 | YWCA Canada launches Y Act Up, a civic engagement and leadership program for young women between 16 and 29 years of age. |
| 2013 | YWCA Canada makes a commitment to Truth and Reconciliation for Indigenous, First Nations, Metis, Inuit and urban Aboriginal women, girls and Two-Spirit People. |
| 2014 | 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. |
| 2017 | YWCA Canada hosts a Lobby Day on Parliament Hill to push for affordable housing for women. |
YWCA Canada gratefully acknowledges and recognizes the following funders for their contribution and support to our national programs and initiatives.

**Canadian Heritage – Exchanges Program**
Think Big! Lead Now! Young Women’s National Leadership Program (Exchanges Program)
Think Big <Look Back> Start Small (Youth Take Charge Program)

**Department of Justice**
Advocate Collaborate Transform: Building Partnerships for Women Survivors of Crime Symposium

**Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada**
DigitalSmarts

**Omega Foundation**
YWCA Accelerator Program

**RBC Foundation**
In Good Company

**RBC Wealth Management / Gestion de patrimoine RBC**
Think Big! Lead Now! Young Women’s National Leadership Program

**Women and Gender Equality**
Born to be Bold

**Future Skills Canada**
Synergy: Born to Be Bold
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2019-2020

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Jessica Franklin, Vice-Chair
Sereena King, Vice-Chair
Yulena Wan, Treasurer
Susan Kennard, Secretary

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Kate Nelischer
Marie-José Ouellet
Brittany Tibbo
Kim van der Woerd*
Yulena Wan

Board Guests
Jamie Medicine Crane**
Katie Ungard**

*Resigned in 2019
**World YWCA board of directors

YWCAs Across Canada

YWCA Agvik Nunavut
YWCA Banff, AB
YWCA Brandon, MB
YWCA Calgary, AB
YWCA Cambridge, ON
YWCA Durham, ON
YWCA Edmonton, AB
YMCA-YWCA Guelph, ON
YWCA Halifax, NS
YWCA Hamilton, ON
Community YMCA-YWCA Kamloops, BC
YWCA Kitchener-Waterloo, ON
YWCA Lethbridge & District, AB
YWCA Metro Vancouver, BC
YWCA Moncton, NB
Y Des Femmes De Montréal, QC
Community YWCA Muskoka, ON
YWCA Niagara Region, ON
YMCA-YWCA National Capital Region, ON
YWCA NWT
YWCA Peterborough Haliburton, ON
YWCA Prince Albert, SK
YWCA Québec, QC
YWCA Regina, SK
YWCA St. Thomas-Elgin, ON
YWCA St. John’s, NL
YWCA Saskatoon, SK
YWCA Sudbury, ON
YWCA Thompson, MB
YWCA Toronto, ON
YMCA-YWCA Winnipeg, MB
YMCA-YWCA Vancouver Island, BC

2019 Recognition Awards

Since 1989, YWCA Canada has recognized the accomplishments and contributions of volunteers and staff who give their time, talents and energy for the advancement of the YWCA Movement and improve the lives of women and girls. The 2019 recipients were:

The Agnes Amelia Blizzard Award

YASO MATHU
YWCA Brandon, National Board Member
linkedin.com/in/yaso-mathu-95043523

The Ann Mowatt Outstanding Young Woman Award

DEANNE HOWLETT
YWCA St. John’s

The Carolyn B. Bray Award

MEDORA UPPAL
YWCA Hamilton
linkedin.com/in/medora-uppal-1488613a

A Strong Voice for Women Advocacy Award

YWCA METRO VANCOUVER
Child Care Now campaign

The Cleta Herman Award

AMBER NIEMEIER
YWCA Edmonton
linkedin.com/in/amberniemeier
We also acknowledge our Member Associations for their support of YWCA Canada’s national and international initiatives.

YWCA Canada would like to acknowledge the generous support of our interns and volunteers.

Advocacy and Coalition Partners / Partenaires de coalition et de plaidoyer

| Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights / Action Canada pour la santé & les droits sexuels |
| Amnesty International Canada / Amnistie internationale Canada francophone |
| Campaign 2000 |
| Canada Without Poverty / Canada sans pauvreté |
| Canadian Alliance for Sex Work Law Reform / Alliance Canadienne pour la Réforme des Lois sur le Travail du Sexe |
| Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness / Alliance canadienne pour mettre fin à l’itinérance |
| Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity / Centre canadien pour la diversité des genres et de la sexualité |
| Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives / Centre canadien de politiques alternatives |
| Canadian Council of Muslim Women / Conseil canadien des femmes musulmanes |
| Canadian Council of Refugees / Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés |
| Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women / La Fédération canadienne des Clubs des femmes de carrières commerciales et professionnelles |
| Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions / Fédération canadienne des syndicats d'infirmières et d'infirmiers |
| Canadian Federation of University Women / Fédération canadienne des femmes diplômées des universités |
| Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action / Alliance canadienne féministe pour l'action internationale |
| Canadian Labour Congress / Congrès du travail du Canada |
| Canadian Women’s Foundation / Fondation canadienne des femmes |
| Child Care Now/Un enfant Une place |
| Child Care Resource and Research Unit |
| Citizens for Public Justice |
| Conseil québécois LGBT |
| CUPE / Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique |
| Democratic Engagement Exchange |
| Disabilities Women's Network of Canada / Réseau d'action des femmes handicapées Canada |
| EGALE |
| Equal Pay Coalition |
| Facebook Canada |
| Family Services Toronto |
| Fédération des femmes du Québec |
| Girl Guides of Canada |
| G(irls)20 |
| Institute for Change Leaders |
| Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants |
| National Association of Women and the Law / Association nationale Femmes et Droit |
| Ontario Nonprofit Network |
| Oxfam Canada |
| Public Services Alliance / Alliance de la fonction publique du Canada |
| Ryerson Leadership Lab |
| Ryerson University's Diversity Institute |
| SEIU Healthcare Canada |
| UNIFOR |
| UN Women We Empower / ONU Femmes – We Empower |
| West Coast Legal and Education Action Fund |
| WomanACT |
| Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund / Fonds d'action et d'éducation juridiques pour les femmes |
| Women’s Shelters Canada / Hébergement femmes Canada |
| World YWCA / YWCA Mondiale |
Project Partners / Partenaires de projets

Body Confidence Canada
Boldly Inclusive
Canadian Women’s Foundation / Fondation canadienne des femmes
Catalyst
DisAbled Women’s Network Canada / Réseau d’action des femmes handicapées Canada
Facebook Canada
Future Ancestors Services
Indigenous Friends Association
MediaSmarts / HabiloMédias
Ontario Coalition of Agencies Serving Immigrants
Plan International Canada
Uber Canada

UN Women We Empower / ONU Femmes – We Empower
Wisdom2Action
Women & HIV/AIDS Initiative
Women in Governance / La Gouvernance au féminin
World Economic Forum / Forum économique mondial
UN Women / ONU Femmes
YWCA USA

Academic Partners / Partenaires universitaires

Centennial College, Corporate Communications / Collège Centennal, Communications externes
GATE- Rotman School of Business, University of Toronto / GATE - École de gestion Rotman, Université de Toronto
McGill University, The Impacts Project / Université McGill, projet Impacts
Ryerson University, Diversity Project (Partnership Agreement) / Université Ryerson, projet Diversity (entente de partenariat)
Ryerson University, School of Social Work / Université Ryerson, École de service social
University of Ottawa, The eQuality Project / Université d’Ottawa, projet eQuality

DONOR RECOGNITION / RECONNAISSANCE DES DONATRICES ET DONATEURS

Estate / Héritage

We honour the memory of the individuals whose legacies were realized in 2019:
Nous honorons la mémoire des personnes dont la volonté philanthropique a été réalisée en 2019:

Shirley Ruth Kuipers
Yvonne E. Schurmann

Catalysts / Instigatrices

Kim Van der Woerd

Legacy Makers Circle / Cercle des bienfaîtrices

Susan Kennard
Margaret MacKenzie
June Murdoch
Joan Tilt
Margaret Torrance

Visionary / Visionnaires

Capital One
Facebook Canada
Sheryl & David Kerr
Keitha McClocklin
Omega Foundation
Uber

Tribute / Hommage

In Memory of / À la mémoire de

Milli Gould
Shelah Lavallin Kent

In Honour of / En l’honneur de

Annie & Steve
Alison Baxter
Dave & Michelle Bullas
Jacinta Evans
Susannah Guinlock
Brad Harris & Dominique Curtis
Trailblazers / Innovatrices et innovateurs

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Women General Counsel Canada
York University
Winona Zelenka
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Nurturing Friends / Ami-e-s bienveillant-e-s

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Fondation Alex U. Soyka
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