

YWCA Cambridge is a home and a voice for women and their families in Cambridge. For more than sixty years we have offered safe places for kids to play and learn, courses to help women grow and develop, and support and advocacy for those in need. Through our child care centres, women's programs, youth programs, community events and public action, we raise awareness of women's issues and work to end violence and poverty.



Girls Stand Strong: Together!

By: Keila MacPherson, YWCA Girl's Council



It was another normal Friday and I couldn't wait to get home from school and relax for the weekend. While watching the news I heard about the girl in British Columbia who was drugged, raped, and pictures of the incident were posted all over Facebook. It absolutely disgusted me! I felt terrible for that girl and it upset me that police officials could not do anything about it. It made me feel unsafe and I felt disappointed in our justice system. This story got me thinking about the things that happen to young girls, girls my age, on a daily basis that do not make the news or that remain repressed within the conscience of

girls all around the world.

Womyn in Canada have claimed what is rightfully theirs for years since the 1870s. What they have not yet fully claimed is the right to speak up. Some womyn are still treated like they are a piece of meat or treated like they are worthless, expendable resources. Anything that puts womyn down, exploits them, or makes them feel vulnerable can be considered acts of violence; the same as bullying or racism. If a woman cannot feel safe in her own community or home, where can she feel safe? Womyn can prove to society that they can accomplish so much when their full potential is reached.

This strength needs to come from a sturdy social foundation that can be acquired in a girl's teenage years. However, teenagers nowadays are cruel to each other for any reason they can think of. (Continued on page 2)

From the Archives

A successful summer program was held in July and August, including an Opportunity for Youth program. Women's program classes were introduced for the first time with the purpose of helping women with personal growth, providing leadership skills, and helping women deal with the many changes in society in regards to women's roles.

"Our thanks to our volunteers, without whom we could not survive! Too numerous to name, too important to forget. For thousands of hours of service to make Cambridge a better and happier place to live."

-- Marion Logan
Executive Director
(1975)

1975

WOMEN'S
INTERNATIONAL
GIFT & GALLERY

Wigg

55 Dickson St. Cambridge, ON



**JOIN US FOR A
UNIQUE SHOPPING
EXPERIENCE!**

Girls Stand Strong cont'd

Girls call each other names for standing up for what they believe in. Boys see that as an open gate that says “they’re doing it to each other, so we can call girls names too”. Well, I have had enough of name-calling and cat-fights! It is degrading to girls of any age in every way!

Since when has it become a competition to see how much skin can be shown in a Facebook profile picture? And girls wonder why guys, and other girls, call them those mean names...it is getting out of hand. Some girls do not realize what messages they are sending out when they dress certain ways. Some do realize this, but that is their choice. My point is that any girl in society should be getting respect, and if they need to have others to support them, they are just as strong as any man! There is strength in numbers and it is definitely not a sign of weakness.

I have had many experiences of being called names, mistreated by past boyfriends, even mistreated by my girl friends. I never let them keep me down, but I had a hard time opening up when I felt unsafe. It is hard for anyone to open up, but it's hard for girls to open up. There is always a fear of being judged, or blamed for their problems. I know people who have been through a lot, and they are still struggling, but they can always together and become aware, such as the White Tiger conference in London, ON. It was the most fun I ever had with such a large group of girls!

“If a woman cannot feel safe in her own community or home, where can she feel safe?”

My guidance counselor suggested the conference to me, but she also directed me to Kaitlyn McQuaid and the YWCA Girl's Council of Cambridge. The Girl's Council is all about girls ages 12 - 18 coming together, sharing their experiences and just having a good time together.

Girls need to be more aware of how they are being treated and how they could be treated if they allow it. It is not right to endure anything that makes you feel unsafe. Not all violence is physical and that needs to be acknowledged. The YWCA Girl's Council of Cambridge will be all girl power, support, confidentiality, and zero tolerance for judgment. So far it is a great experience, and I think it will be for everyone on the council!

International Women's Day on Dickson Street



Have you been to Dickson Street lately? The recent addition of several women-run businesses across from city hall made Dickson Street the perfect place for Cambridge to celebrate the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day on March 8th.

In 1911 more than one million women and men attended IWD rallies in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland campaigning for women's rights to work, vote, be trained, to hold public office and end discrimination. In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution calling on member states to proclaim a day for women's rights and international peace.

The theme for this year's celebration in Cambridge was “International Women's Day on Dickson Street: Supporting Women Locally and Internationally”. The event was a celebration of women's entrepreneurship locally and internationally, and featured raffle gifts donated from women-run businesses on Dickson Street: Gallery M, Tiny Cakes, Phidon, ReNew, Salon Beleeze, and the Women's International Gift & Gallery (WIGG). Thank you to all of the businesses who supported and participated in this event, and everyone who came down to Dickson Street to join the celebration!

The Women's International Gift & Gallery is a social enterprise operated by YWCA Cambridge. It is a global gift shop that features the unique work of women artists and artisans locally, nationally & internationally and includes an assortment of Fair Trade items. Proceeds from purchases go directly to supporting YWCA Cambridge programs that support women and girls in our community.

Knitting a Community



Last summer Main Street Bridge in Cambridge was a sight to see. Wrapped completely in knitting, it was a project that brought the community together in a tribute to its textile past. People came from all over to witness the incredible art installation on the Main street bridge.

Sue Sturdy, 2010 artist-in-residence at the Cambridge Centre for the Arts and visionary behind KnitCambridge, invited knitters from the Cambridge community and beyond to contribute their knitting to the creation of a collaborative, large scale piece of outdoor public art.

Pieces came from Fresno, Elgin Texas, Oliver BC, Australia, New Zealand,

England, all over Ontario, and every corner of Cambridge. Over 1,000 people were part of this large piece of public art and 1700 zip ties were used to attach it to the bridge. Once the knitting was taken down, the efforts of this collaboration were transformed into blankets and scarves for community support programmes. 1500 lbs of knit was cleaned and over 400 scarves were distributed along with over 100 afghans to shelters and the food bank. In February of 2011, Sue Sturdy presented a donation of \$1500 to YWCA Cambridge from the proceeds raised from the KnitCambridge project.



Federal Election Guide Released

The 2011 federal election is just around the corner! The Social Action & Advocacy Committee of Waterloo Region has released a Guide to help new (and seasoned) voters to be active participants in the upcoming election. "A Young Canadian's Guide to Participating in the 2011 Federal Election" includes important information about how an election works, what information you need to bring to the polls, and background information for some of the important issues that are being addressed during the campaign., including criminal law, employment insurance, citizenship and immigration, trade, and taxation and social services.

Download a copy of the guide from our website, www.ywcambridge.ca/social-action-advocacy.html, and share widely!

ON MAY 2nd, VOTE!

Receive this newsletter in your email inbox! Visit www.ywcacambridge.ca to subscribe.

Contact YWCA Cambridge
55 Dickson Street,
Cambridge, ON
N1R 7A5
(519) 267-6444
www.ywcacambridge.ca

Upcoming Events



Walk A Mile In Her Shoes combines big hearts with big feet and brings the whole community together for a great cause. The event premise is simple; men collect pledges and walk a few blocks in women's shoes, raising eyebrows and funds in support of YWCA Cambridge's programs for women and families.

Register today, encourage a friend to walk, and join us on June 22nd, at Cambridge City Hall, from noon – 1pm to cheer on the brave men who are stepping up and stepping out in support of YWCA Cambridge! Food will be available for purchase. Meals are free for walkers.

Visit our website and take a look at pictures from last year's walk for a taste of what you can expect on June 22nd.



For the 18th year, YWCA Cambridge will honour ten women leaders and one exceptional young woman for their outstanding contribution to improving the lives of women and girls in our community.

The Awards ceremony will be held on Wednesday, May 25th at Cambridge City Hall. A reception will be held at 6:30pm (cash bar), followed by Award Presentations. Tickets are \$55 per person (\$25 for full time students), and can be purchased from YWCA Cambridge at 55 Dickson Street, across from City Hall, or by phone (519) 267-6444. Credit and Debit cards accepted.

Please join us on May 25th to celebrate Cambridge's Women of Distinction.

I want to support the innovative, creative ways that YWCA Cambridge supports women and girls in our community:

\$25 \$50 \$100 Surprise Us \$ _____

Payment Preference: My cheque to YWCA Cambridge is enclosed
 Please charge my credit card Visa MasterCard

Card # _____ Expiry Date ____ / ____

Signature: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____ Email address: _____

Please complete and return to:

YWCA Cambridge 55 Dickson St., Cambridge ON N1R 7A5

To make your donation online, visit www.CanadaHelps.org (keyword YWCA Cambridge).

