

Welcome to the inaugural issue of "W Connections", news from our new location at 55 Dickson Street. In this issue we'll share with you our journey as an enterprising non-profit, how to learn empathy from a baby, and an update on YWCA Cambridge's annual Women of Distinction Awards. If you'd like to receive this newsletter in your email inbox, visit our website ([www.ywcacambridge.ca](http://www.ywcacambridge.ca)) to subscribe. Follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/YWCACambridge](http://www.facebook.com/YWCACambridge)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/ywcacambridge](http://www.twitter.com/ywcacambridge))

Sincerely,  
Jay Harrison  
Marketing & Communications Coordinator



## Journey Into the World of Retail

### Becoming an enterprising non-profit

For several weeks, the storefront at 55 Dickson Street was bustling with the sounds of construction and laughter. Students from the Visual Merchandising program at Conestoga College painted, decorated and assembled under the watchful eye of instructor Dan Ingrouville. Their infectious energy floated through the building drawing curious staff from the YWCA offices that back onto the storefront. As part of their coursework the students were charged with creating the interior design layout for YWCA Cambridge's new social enterprise, the Women's International Gift & Gallery (affectionately known as WIGG). Upon completion, they have created a masterpiece. They have turned the once bland, vacant space into a vibrant, eclectic display that perfectly compliments the unique artistic wares featured in the store.

In October of 2010 another group of enthusiastic and dedicated students from Conestoga College, this time from the Graphic Design program poured their energy, passion and creativity into creating a professional, market-ready face for WIGG with a complete branding package, as part of Createathon 2010. YWCA Cambridge was 1 of 9 local non-profits chosen to participate in Createathon 2010, an international event that provides pro bono marketing services to non-profits during a 24-hour creative marathon. The local event was organized by Kitchener design and marketing firm, Two Blonde Chicks.

In 2009, recognizing the need for a more sustainable source of revenue for the YWCA, Executive Director, Kim Decker, and the YWCA Board of Directors saw the potential benefit in starting a market-based venture. It was decided from the start that this would be a social purpose venture. Meaning, in addition to creating a new source of revenue for the YWCA, (Continued on page 4)

WOMEN'S  
INTERNATIONAL  
GIFT & GALLERY

55 Dickson St. Cambridge, ON

*Wigg*

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

YWCA 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.

## The Roots of Empathy

### Learning empathy from a baby



Baby Scarlett lies, stomach down on a green blanket craning her neck up to see the smiling, young faces all around her. The grade 6 students from Hillcrest Public School lean in from the edge of the blanket with anticipation and undivided attention, not wanting to miss a single move that she makes. Mom, Diane, notes that Scarlett has two new teeth since the last time they visited the class, and one of the students observes that Scarlett has also started to grip more since the last time they saw her. The children giggle as Scarlett swishes her arms back and forth trying to propel herself toward a toy just out of her reach. Instructor, Carol Acres, points out that Scarlett is demonstrating persistence; and when asked what sorts of emotions Scarlett is experiencing at the moment, the students respond that she is probably feeling eager and frustrated. Identifying Scarlett's emotions helps the students to recognize and talk about their own emotions when

Carol returns the next week to present a follow-up class about emotions.

This scene is quite typical of a Roots of Empathy classroom. Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based classroom program that has shown dramatic effect in reducing levels of aggression among school children by raising social and emotional competence and increasing empathy. At the heart of the program is a volunteer family with a baby between 2 and 4 months old that is paired with an elementary school classroom ranging from kindergarten to grade 8, and a volunteer instructor. The baby is the "Teacher", who helps bring the innovative program's curriculum to life. The goal of the program is to help children identify and reflect on their own feelings and the feelings of others. YWCA Cambridge has been the coordinating agency for Roots of Empathy in Waterloo Region since 2007. In the 2010/2011 school year the program is being delivered in 36 classrooms across the Region, with (continued on page 3)

## From the Archives

### 1948

The Galt YWCA was incorporated in 1948 in part due to the influx of women in Cambridge working in local factories and offices who needed housing. First programs included: support for newcomers to Canada, sewing, cooking, leatherwork, camera club, social club, oil painting, shell work, drama, dances, badminton, gym, swim and basketball.

*"As we step forward into the future and attempt to bring to the youth of Galt a program of service, activity and opportunity to participate in the planning and decision making of a truly democratic association we shall be praying not for tasks equal to our powers, but powers equal to our tasks."*

-- Ruth Sims  
Executive Director  
(1948)

## Learning empathy from a baby (cont'd from page 2)

21 dedicated volunteer instructors and 36 volunteer families, helping the program reach approximately 900 students. Because of the success of Roots of Empathy in Waterloo Region and the unique approach of the YWCA child care centres, YWCA Cambridge was chosen as 1 of 12 early childhood centres in Ontario to pilot the Seeds of Empathy program, which is designed for preschool-aged children, and with a greater focus on literacy.

Class time comes to a close with a goodbye song to Scarlett. The grade 6 students stand in a circle around the green blanket, and as Diane carries her around the inside of the circle – so that Scarlett can see the children singing to her – she fixes her eyes on each student as she passes them. The emotional connection between Scarlett and the students is palpable. Sharon Burzotta, Coordinator of Roots of Empathy for YWCA Cambridge, notes that even the fussiest baby will stop and engage with the students this way at the end of each class. The students file out of the classroom quietly, empathetic to Scarlett's aversion to loud noises, and she doesn't take her eyes off of them until the last child has left the room.

For more information please contact Sharon Burzotta: (519) 267-6444, or [s.burzotta@ywcacambridge.ca](mailto:s.burzotta@ywcacambridge.ca).

## Upcoming Events

### 2nd Annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes



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 (minimum \$100) and walk a few blocks in women's shoes, raising eyebrows and funds in support of YWCA Cambridge's programs for women and families. Visit our website ([www.ywcacambridge.ca](http://www.ywcacambridge.ca)) for more information and to see pictures from last years walk.

## Don't Just Thank Her, Nominate Her!

### 2011 Women of Distinction nominations now open

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. Who is a woman of distinction? She consistently displays and exercises leadership. She demonstrates vision, innovation or creativity and the courage to take risks. She enriches and improves the quality of life for others. She has an impact in her chosen field of endeavour. She demonstrates initiative and a pioneering spirit. She displays and sustains a continued commitment to her community. She promotes and supports the expansion of opportunities and choices for women and girls in her community. She has made Cambridge a better place to live. Nomination packages are now available at 55 Dickson St., or online at [www.ywcacambridge.ca/nominations.html](http://www.ywcacambridge.ca/nominations.html). This year's awards will be held on May 25th.

[www.ywcacambridge.ca/womenofdistinction](http://www.ywcacambridge.ca/womenofdistinction)

## Becoming an enterprising non-profit (cont'd from page 1)

it would also provide a social return. It was a natural step then to make a commitment to selling fair trade products. The result is a store similar to Ten Thousand Villages, but with the added commitment to supporting women artists and artisans. To date, WIGG features 50 local, national, and international women artists and artisans, many with inspiring stories. Including Kong, who's beautiful silk scarves are hand-crafted by women who have been victimized by landmines in Cambodia.

The storefront at 55 Dickson St. is the second phase of the Women's International Gift & Gallery. Between 2009 and 2010 YWCA Cambridge held 5 sales at various sites in the community, including the offices of the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries. These sales were an overwhelming success, and proof that a permanent storefront would be a viable next step in expanding this initiative. The new storefront, along with the new YWCA Cambridge office, officially opened with an open house on November 4th, 2010. Over 100 guests came out to celebrate the beginning of a new era for the YWCA, and to take a look at what the new store had to offer. Visit us online at [www.ywcacambridge.ca/wigg](http://www.ywcacambridge.ca/wigg)

Kim Decker, YWCA Executive Director, with students from the Conestoga College Graphic Design program, and program coordinator, John Baljkas. The class created the design concept for the Women's International Gift & Gallery as part of Createathon 2010, an event organized by Kitchener design and marketing firm, Two Blonde Chicks.



**I want to support the innovative, creative ways that the YWCA 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

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Please complete and return to:

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

To make your donation online, visit [www.CanadaHelps.org](http://www.CanadaHelps.org) (keyword YWCA Cambridge).

