

Building

COMMUNITY

2019 Annual Report



An abstract painting featuring a central black cross. The background is composed of various colors including blue, orange, red, yellow, and purple, with visible brushstrokes and textures. The text is overlaid on the cross.

Like the sun, you illuminate warmth

Warmth to others

To yourself

You keep this world flourishing



Our Mission

YWCA Cambridge, a trusted community leader, gives a voice to the needs of cis and trans women and girls and non-binary individuals through innovative and responsive programs, services and advocacy.

Our Vision

Through leadership, advocacy and program and service delivery, YWCA Cambridge will influence communities to ensure women and girls are respected, valued and equal.

Guiding Principle

YWCA Cambridge connects the community with the realities of the lives of women and girls. With respect, we share their stories and experiences to educate, build awareness and influence change.

OUR VALUES

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

YWCA Cambridge works with and for women and from a women's perspective. We believe women must take leadership in order to achieve equity and equality for all women.

SELF-DETERMINATION

We believe in the fundamental right and responsibility of women and girls to make choices regarding their lives and we commit to supporting them in those choices.

ACCESSIBILITY

YWCA Cambridge is committed to being accessible and welcoming to all people who participate in our work, our programs and our services.

COMMUNITY MINDEDNESS

We believe in and support the growth and development of healthy communities.

EQUITY

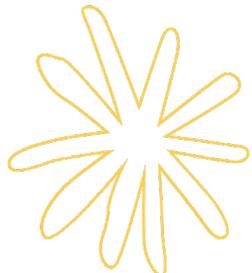
We foster an environment of equality and open-mindedness to ensure that individual voices are heard.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We believe that we are accountable to our stakeholders, participants and volunteers and as such we manage and grow our organization in a responsible and sustainable way related to our mission, vision and values.

INCLUSION

We believe in an inclusive environment that respects the dignity and diversity of our participants, staff and volunteers and encourages them to reach their full potential.



A Message From Kim

Community: A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interest and goals.

This definition of community speaks directly to the work of YWCA Cambridge. We are an organization that provides programs and services with and for cis and trans women and girls and non-binary and two-spirit individuals. We lean into each other, call one another into conversations that make our agency stronger and more accessible and we respect the diverse opinions and insights that guide our work. We acknowledge that our ways of work are a process and that as we come to know better, we do better.

As a member association of YWCA Canada and the World YWCA, we are privileged to be part of a global community of women who believe that when women rise to leadership, they transform power structures and policies around human rights, gender equality, peace and justice.

Locally, our community of women includes board members, participants, volunteers and staff - all who are an integral part, and play important roles in moving YWCA Cambridge forward. My very sincere thanks to each of them for working together and for challenging long-held beliefs and actions so that, together, we can influence change and challenge the systemic oppression that confronts our community of women on a daily basis. Our work is informed by the lived experiences of the participants who access our programs and services. With respect, we share their stories to bring reality to their issues and their barriers. They are our teachers. We strive to create safer spaces for honest conversations, for education, for reflection and for action.

Thank you to our donors, our sponsors and our funders who value our work and recognize the important place it has in our community and impact it has on the folks we support - we could not do this work without your support.

Are we satisfied with where we are as an organization? The answer is this: for us to continue to grow and remain relevant, we must be committed to regularly revisiting, examining and changing our ways of work to ensure that we are inclusive of all voices in the community of women we support.

Kim Decker
Executive Director
YWCA Cambridge

Board of Directors

Chair

Christine Vigna

Vice Chair

Norma McDonald-Ewing

Treasurer

Darlene Sigel

Secretary

Victoria Clark

Sue Sturdy, Valerie Pollard, Meagan Swan, Megan Lambe, Sarah Daly, Lauren Reny, Jess Hewitt, Ailish McIntyre, Amy Willard-Brown (resigned during 2019)



ADVOCACY

As a community of women it is not only important to celebrate the work that is being done locally but also a time to recognize some of the major accomplishments of women around the world in 2019.

- 1.** NASA Astronauts Jessica Meir and Christina Koch took part in the first all-woman spacewalk in October when they ventured out of the International Space Centre to replace a power controller.
- 2.** After winning their fourth FIFA Women's World Cup in July, the US Women's National Team turned their attention to their off-the-field goals: Equal pay for work of equal value. A federal judge threw out the players' claim of discriminatory pay in April 2020. Billie Jean King has been and continues to be a staunch supporter of the women's soccer team as she fought for equal prize money for women in tennis in the 1970's. She once said: "Everyone thinks women should be thrilled when we get crumbs, and I want women to have the cake, the icing and the cherry on top, too."
- 3.** Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old activist from Sweden, became the face of a global movement for climate change in 2019. Thunberg's movement started with her skipping school and camping out in front of the Swedish Parliament, demanding action to protect the planet for future generations. Her actions attracted global attention and sparked protests led by young activists around the world.
- 4.** Apple introduced the period emoji - a drop of blood - in an effort to end the stigma and break the silence around menstruation. The push for the change came from Plan International UK.

5.

A young woman in Spain was finally awarded justice after being raped in 2016 by a group of men who referred to themselves as la manada (the wolf pack). A lower court verdict found the five men guilty of the lesser charge of sexual abuse after the survivor was depicted as a willing participant. In 2019 the Spanish Supreme Court ruling found the men guilty of rape and increased their prison sentences showing a shift away from the culture of victim-blaming.

6.

In Egypt, Tanzania and Indonesia bans on child marriage are now in effect, working to protect girls, their futures and education.

7.

Sanna Marin, 34, of Finland, became the world's youngest Prime Minister. In December she was sworn in as the head of a coalition of five parties, all headed by women. Marin is the third woman, and the youngest Prime Minister in Finnish history.

8.

Botswana, Brazil and Ecuador all undertook legal reforms to protect the human rights of members of the LGBTQ community. Ecuador is one of a very few countries in Latin America to legalize same-sex marriage.

9.

In October 2018, Gita Gopinath was appointed to serve as the International Monetary Fund's chief economist—making her the first woman to take on the role, which she stepped into in January. Born in Kolkata, India, Gopinath is a professor of international studies and economics at Harvard University.

10.

Tengku Maimun Tuan Mat became Malaysia's first female Chief Justice on May 2. Before her appointment, only men had held the top judge position since the country was founded in 1963.

11.

In October 2019, Bernardine Evaristo became the first black woman to win one of the most prestigious awards in literature—a Booker Prize—for her novel *Girl, Woman, Other*. Evaristo shares this year's prize with Margaret Atwood, who also won for *The Testaments*.



THE W

The W is a community space operated through YWCA Cambridge that provides supportive, inclusive and participant-led programs for cisgender and transgender women and girls, non-binary and two-spirit individuals. All programs are geared toward the needs of participants, with overarching themes such as social justice and activism, holistic wellness, healthy relationships, STEM-based learning and pre-

employment learning and mentoring. This space is home to our pre-employment program **Small Steps to Success** and our programs for youth - **STEPS, SHYFT, TechGyrls, STEM Mentoring** and **GLOW**. The W also serves as a community space for events and workshops, facilitated by a staff that is committed to building a community that feels safer and more inclusive for everyone in it.

POWER OF BEING YOU - full-day conference 25 participants

The Power of Being You Conference is a one-day event hosted by YWCA Cambridge for grade 8 cis and trans girls and non-binary youth. Bringing together youth from the Waterloo Region community, this year's conference focused on arts-based activism, leading participants through workshops that will help them to build relationships, learn about themselves and the intersections of their identities, and develop new skills all with a social justice framework.

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT - RALLY AND MARCH led by members of The W Feminist Youth Collective.

A powerful opportunity, not only to speak out against gendered violence, but to actively engage men and boys in ending gender based violence.

Approximately 150 participants and community partners attended.

Community partners in attendance: Sanguen Health Services, WCSWR, SASC & Male Allies, Family Counselling Centre of Cambridge and North Dumfries, SHORE Centre, ACCKWA, SWAN with community representation/speakers regarding MMIWG

FEMINIST YOUTH COLLECTIVE - (Funded by Cambridge and North Dumfries Community Foundation)

The Feminist Youth Collective kicked off 2019 by participating in the Waterloo Region Women's March on January 19 in downtown Kitchener. One member performed spoken word at the rally to over 300 people! This group of cis and trans girls, non-binary and two-spirit high school aged youth engages in all kinds of activism in our community. They continue to guide the direction of our Power of Being You Conference, Take Back the Night and other initiatives in their schools and communities.

THE FEMINIST NIGHT MARKET

Launched in 2018, the FNM is a space where local cis and trans women, non-binary and two spirit artists, makers and more can showcase their products and talents.

In 2019, we hosted 3 Feminist Night Markets: Spring, Summer and Winter. Combined, we were able to raise more than \$4,000 for The W and support over 40 vendors and performers through the Night Market in 2019, which helped us to purchase much needed supplies, as well as expand our networks of volunteers and community supporters.

A snapshot

62 Programs

36 Workshops

2,122 Participants

6 Volunteers

TechGyrls

Made possible by the Canadian Women's Foundation, with donations from Rockwell Automation and Soroptimist International of Cambridge

A 12-week program for cis and trans girls, non-binary and two-spirit youth ages 9 to 13, TechGyrls is rooted in the knowledge that cis and trans women and girls, non-binary and two-spirit youth are disproportionately underrepresented in the STEM fields...and you can't dream of being what you can't see!

8 Programs

70 Participants

8 Youth Volunteers

94% reported an increase in their interest in STEM

96% reported feeling more confident about their STEM skills, abilities and knowledge

86% reported an increase in their interest in pursuing STEM related education and/or careers.

*When asked following programming . Data is from both TechGyrls and STEM Mentoring programs

One of the in-school TechGyrls groups was particularly interested in environmental activism. We spent time out in the forested green space behind their school appreciating nature and picking up garbage. We also collected garbage from the neighborhood surrounding the school, and learned to properly sort waste into compost, garbage and recycling. Participants shared this helped them to feel a sense of connection to and responsibility for their community, and ensuring that it is a safe space, both for them and the wildlife who inhabit the neighborhood.

“ In TechGyrls, I can say my opinion and not get judged. I got to know people from my class and grade that I didn't know before, and made new friends who support me. ”

“ I trust everyone in TechGyrls, which has made me be more brave than I've ever been before. ”

STEM Mentoring

Made possible by the Canadian Women's Foundation

An ongoing mentorship program for cis and trans girls, non-binary and two-spirit youth ages 9 to 13, STEM Mentoring is rooted in the belief that youth cannot be what they cannot see, It's about more than just building participants' interest in skills in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math); it's about building strong relationships with other participants and mentors (who just so happen to be amazing women working in our community in the STEM field)!

1 Program

8 Participants

8 Mentors

Participants were divided on whether or not they wanted to experience a reptile show; about half were thrilled about the idea, wanting nothing more than be able to touch and hold animals they love, and the other half were terrified and didn't want to go anywhere near a tarantula or snake. After some discussion, the participants decided that they were ready for it, and those who didn't want to participate shared feeling comfortable to leave the room when an animal they didn't want to be close to was brought out. When the day came and the interpreter arrived with all sorts of creatures, participants were equal parts excited and terrified. Ones who were excited and knew facts about some of the animals shared what they knew to calm the nerves of participants who were afraid. The participants comforted each other and provided words of encouragement, making the space feel safe enough that not a single participant chose to leave the room for any of the animals. Participants were so brave to touch and even hold animals they have feared, and one even shared it changed her perspective from being terrified of snakes to wanting one as a pet.

“ I was having the worst day until I got here. I needed to get lost in some science with you. I feel so much better. ”

- Mentor to mentee

“ My mentor is THE BEST, and I am so happy I got to meet her. ”

STEM Mini Con

2019 marked our 5th annual Mini Con. Featuring over a dozen local organizations and community groups, this year we had about 100 attendees. Participants made slime, color changing lemonade, solved crimes, used scroll saws, learned about circuitry and more! The Mini Con is an afternoon event that creates opportunities for cis and trans girls, non-binary and two-spirit youth to explore a broad variety of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math topics, educations and careers.

Made possible by
the Canadian Women's Foundation

GLOW

Made possible by the Ontario Trillium Fund

A 12-week program for cis and trans girls, non-binary and two-spirit youth ages 8 to 14, GLOW is rooted in the philosophy of holistic wellness. We know that a narrow definition of wellness that solely focuses on being healthy does not address intrinsic barriers that may affect participation in physical activity, whether that be low self-esteem, negative body image, peer pressure or one of the many other barriers that our participants have encountered.

22 Programs **137** Participants **8** Volunteers

Connectedness:

80% reported an increase in their ability to reach out to people they trust for support when they need it

89% reported an increase when asked if they feel less lonely or belong more since participating in the program

Self-esteem and confidence:

86% reported an increase in feeling comfortable with “who they are and the things that they do”

Resilience:

81% reported an increase in their ability to pick themselves up and try again when things don't work out

78% reported an increase in their ability to try new things and pursue their interests

Critical thinking:

82% reported an increase in their ability to question the world around them and find their place in it

Communication:

80% reported an increase in their ability to express their thoughts, feelings and opinions openly even when someone might disagree



In 2019 peer volunteers began facilitating their own GLOW programs in pairs within the community for the first time. It has been wonderful to watch past participants grow into facilitators and pass on their learning to the next generation. The peer facilitators have shared with us that they have brought their learning and work with GLOW into other parts of their communities - one in particular has used her experiences in GLOW to advocate for change at the school-board level around inclusivity and meeting the needs of people who might have otherwise been forgotten.

SHYFT

Made possible by the Lyle S Hallman Foundation

A 12 to 15-week program for youth ages 8 to 12. SHYFT is offered in both mixed-gender and gender-specific environments.

It is rooted in our confidence in youth's abilities to change the world around them. This program provides opportunity for discussion and action, by allowing participants to make sense of what they are experiencing externally and feeling internally. This program covers topics like body image, self-esteem, media and pop culture literacy, gossip, social justice and action.

The goal of SHYFT is to foster critical thinking skills and provide outlets for participants to create their own social-justice based media-arts projects. The program has proven, not only to positively affect those who participate, but their amazing projects have been shared with and impacted the entire community.

19 Programs

23 Workshops

55 Community presentations

3 Camps

5 Volunteers

1,879 Participants

“ It helped me learn why I was feeling so bad. ”

– Participant age 12 speaking about the gender box activity.

“ This group showed me that I have the right to ask questions when something doesn't feel right. ”

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT



STEPS

Made possible by United Way

A 12-week program for cis and trans girls and non-binary and two-spirit youth ages 8 to 18, STEPS is rooted in the perspective that young people have valuable and unique knowledge to offer as a result of their lived experiences. STEPS is about creating a safe space, developing skills for healthy relationships, reducing isolation and increasing inclusion, engaging participants in critical thinking and building leadership skills.

This program covers topics such as relationships, assertive communication skills, self-esteem and self-confidence, and stress management techniques. Past activities have included positive body image art, stress management with stress balls, communication role-play, and affirmation boards.

9 Programs **79** Participants

79% feel less lonely or like they belong more*

79% feel better about who they are and the things that they do*

91% have begun assessing the health of their relationships*

*When asked following programming

“I have better friendships since I've been here” ”

“A guy I am friends with; we fight all the time, but we apologize all the time, but now I am thinking about if that friendship is a good one.” ”

We learned from our participants that a common stressor among them was math. The stress of worrying about understanding math was impacting their relationships with friends and family, and so we reached out to the Math Guru, Vanessa Vakharia. We had so much fun learning about Vanessa's journey from failing math to loving it to the point of getting her Master's in it. You might wonder how math fits into a healthy relationships group, but that's just it. The pieces of our lives are so interwoven and impact each other.

Vanessa connected our stressors to the fear of failing, and math is one of those stressors that can leave us feeling like we're not good enough! Her story inspired others to share just how big of a worry the subject of math is for them, as well as share their strengths and how those strengths can be used as their math superpower, such as patience, creativity and a sense of humor.



2/20

Small Steps to Success

A 12-week holistic life skills and pre-employment program



28

Graduates

3

Programs

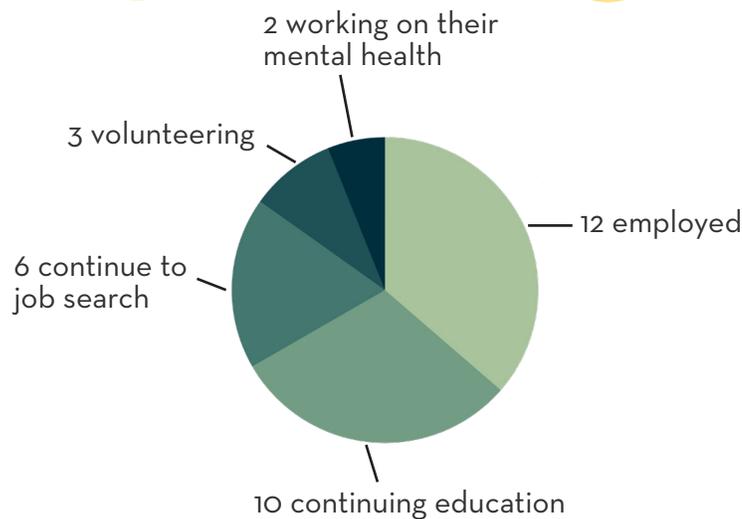
Festive Futures

This annual holiday giving program brings together our community to help deserving families enjoy the holidays. This program is open to graduates of our Small Steps to Success Program.

80 Participants

29 Sponsors

\$1,200 in cash donations



“ It is an amazing and supportive program! I’d advise anyone to go. I came into this program with crippling anxiety, and within weeks of routine and support, I started feeling better. ”

“ It changed me in so many ways. I now have the tools I need to go forward in whatever I choose to do. It is worth taking the time to go to this group. ”

A **Women in Transition Steering Committee** was formed this year so that participants could take more of an active leadership role in the weekly drop-in group for graduates. The committee has organized a trip to LA Franks and river stroll and workshops such as Sewing 101, a wreath making, restorative yoga, DIY spa day, food budgeting and more!

Made possible by the Region of Waterloo

With generous sponsorship from IODE Preston Chapter, Soroptomist International Cambridge and Canuck Compounders

Roots Of Empathy

An award-winning program developed by Mary Gordon in 1996, Roots of Empathy has been coordinated by YWCA Cambridge across Waterloo and Wellington Regions for over 10 years.

At the heart of the program is a local family and their baby, our “tiny teacher”, who visit once every three weeks. Through guided observation facilitated by the volunteer instructor, students witness the baby’s milestones and temperament traits throughout the year, learning more about the baby and themselves. When the baby is sad or happy, they feel these same emotions. By understanding the baby’s cues, they learn to understand the cues from their classmates and friends, ultimately building empathy for one another.

58 Programs

57 Instructors

57 Volunteer Families

1450 Students

Research shows that students who participate in this program show an increase in sharing, cooperation and understanding of one another, while classroom aggression decreases. Messaging and activities that focus on social inclusion support a caring culture in the classroom. Furthermore, it strives to break the intergenerational cycle of violence and poor parenting. When students see the loving relationship between a parent and baby, they see how “love grows brains.”

Since 2007, the Waterloo and Wellington regions have hosted over **824** programs impacting **20,375** students.

“My daughter and I participated in Roots of Empathy at Blair Road Public School. The students loved watching her reach her milestones like rolling over, sitting up, and crawling. Their excitement for our visits was cute to see. My daughter loved hearing the welcome song at each visit...I would highly recommend volunteering for Roots of Empathy. It was a positive experience for both my family and the school community.”

Carolyn Munch and Baby Ella
Roots of Empathy Volunteer Family

Child Care

We are committed to the Reggio Emilia approach to learning. This world-renowned philosophy invites children to examine the things that ignite their imagination and encourages them to explore, investigate and discover their world in a meaningful way.

YWCA Cambridge's holistic approach to programs makes our centres great spaces for children with a variety of needs. We use support from community agencies and have our own in-house inclusion facilitator.

4 Centres **400** In our care **lots** Of changes!

2019 Centre Goals

Each year, centres set two goals for improvement. This year, we were fortunate to receive the Waterloo Ready Quality Initiatives grant to help us realize our goals.

Learning Environment

- St. Margarets is focusing on the importance of music as a universal and inclusive medium for learning and development.

Music

- St. Margarets is focusing on the importance of music as a universal and inclusive medium for learning and development.

Relationships

- Staff at St. Elizabeth are focusing on strengthening relationships with families by taking extensive professional development about children with varying needs, and sharing resources gathered with parents.

Nutrition

- St. Elizabeth, Ryerson and St. Margaret centres are adopting a farm-to-table model, planting vegetable gardens with the children so that they learn where their food comes from, and in turn eat more nutritious meals.
- At Ryerson Centre, staff are improving menus and investigating different dietary needs of the children in care, including cultural restrictions and allergies.
- At LINC, staff have revisited menus and begun swapping out items for more nutritious options.



A whole new way of communicating with families!

In 2019, we launched our HiMama platform to our child care staff. With the HiMama app, staff can document children's growth, development and routine activities including meals and naps. Staff can also more easily communicate with parents and guardians through in-app instant messaging.



himama

Summer Camp

YWCA Cambridge Summer Day Camps at Shade's Mills Conservation Area have been an essential summer destination for children in Cambridge and the surrounding area for over 50 years. there's something for everyone.

9 Camps

390 Campers

48 Subsidies

At camp:

Every child deserves to experience exciting new things

Many of our campers have never been fishing before. It's amazing to observe the look on their faces when they catch their first fish. They couldn't wait to tell their families at pick up time!

Every child deserves to have fun

We are fortunate to be able to provide camp subsidies to families who wouldn't otherwise be able to give the joy of camp to their children. Subsidies are made possible by the Region of Waterloo and the Community Grant foundation.

Every child deserves to feel included

We have a qualified inclusion facilitator who works both in our child care centres and our camps because we believe every child deserves to be included. The facilitator ensures children with unique needs are given the tools and support they need to thrive in group environments.



2019 Events

4 Events **494** Attendees **\$42,110** Raised



25th Anniversary Women of Distinction Awards

179 Attendees

\$7,000 Raised

10 Recipients



She Talks

125 Attendees

\$6,500 Raised

7 Speakers



Walk A Mile

54 Walkers

\$22,535 Raised



Race To Erase

11 Participating charities

34 Teams

\$41,130 Raised

\$6,075 Raised for YWCA Cambridge

Introducing the Circle of Distinction



2019 marked the introduction of the YWCA Cambridge Circle of Distinction, which welcomes all past and present recipients of Women of Distinction awards.

The goal of the Circle is to provide alumni with updates about YWCA Cambridge's work in the community, and to create exclusive opportunities for Women of Distinction alumni to collaborate and network with other recipients at special events curated for members throughout the year.



SHE HAS THE CONFIDENCE SHE NEEDS TO STAND TALL THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT

Last year, working with over **275 donors and funders**, both public and private, and local partners we were able to provide free, inclusive and accessible programming to more than **300 cis and trans women and girls, non-binary and two-spirit participants in our community.**

This is what we did together.

86% of all youth participants felt a greater sense of self-confidence and confidence*

85% of all youth participants felt a greater sense of resilience*

84% of all youth participants felt an increase in critical thinking skills*

*As a result of participating in any of our youth programming

"If I had to pick only one thing that I love about the Girls Centre out of the many it would be how safe it makes me and other girls feel"

Why Invest in Women and Girls?

When you invest in women and girls, you invest in stronger, more stable families and communities. You develop capable workers, people who produce more, save more, and spend more, right now and 30 years from now. You raise a generation of healthier kids with brighter futures, and you lower the cost of everything from public safety to social services to healthcare.

Invest in women and girls, and you invest a society that works - for everyone.

When you give to YWCA Cambridge, you tell the world that women and girls matter. Whether you give

your time, lend your voice, make a donation or send a child to summer camp for the very first time, you are changing the world.

97% of donations directly support programming and participants

More than ever before, we need more people to invest in women and girls so that we can continue to provide opportunities that we know will prevent gender-based violence, create safe(r) spaces, help girls break down barriers and forge opportunities that they otherwise would not have.

We know that we can get there but we need your help.

Wigg

Beautiful things for a beautiful cause

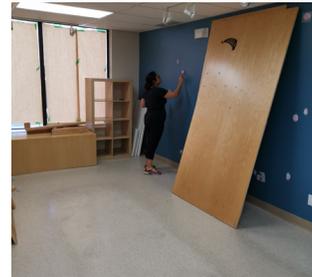
A social enterprise operated by YWCA Cambridge, we offer the latest fashions in clothing and accessories, with a focus on woman-made, quality goods.

WIGG got a whole new look! With the help of virtually all staff - and their spouses, neighbours and children - we stripped the store and built her back better, and in one week flat! Now WIGG is fresh, modern and easy to shop.

12 Volunteers



From here



To HERE



5 New lines added



“A charming little boutique in the downtown core - the friendly staff, one-of-a-kind items and beautiful clothing make it part of the allure of the downtown shopping experience. Highly recommend!”

-Google reviewer

3 Lynn Spence events



“A hidden gem. So much fun to shop. The clothing choices are wonderful and the accessories are outstanding. Definitely worth your while to visit this store.”

-Google reviewer



WIGGonline.com



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