

YWCA NWT Timeline

60 years of Commitment to Creating Positive Change for Northern Women and Families



The YWCA NWT mission is to advocate for and serve Northern women, families and youth. We provide safe and supportive housing as well as a range of integrated and culturally relevant programs and services that contribute to their safety, empowerment, and ability to thrive.

1966: A local committee is struck to establish a YWCA in the Northwest Territories to help serve the growing population of single, working women.

1968: The new YWCA Yellowknife opens the doors of a seven-bed residence for single women in Yellowknife.

1969: YWCA opens its first summer camp for children (later taken over by the City of Yellowknife).

1972: YWCA opens the NWT's first day care centre in Yellowknife and continues to expand childcare spaces through the decade. Day care programs lasted until the mid-1990s.

1974: YWCA opens the first after-school program at Mildred Hall School. Today, the after-school program offers affordable childcare at five schools.

1978: YWCA expanded housing options again by opening a large residence for women and children in Northern United Place (NUP), Yellowknife.

1986: The 12 bed Alison McAteer House is established in NUP and [named after a former YWCA president and city councillor](#).

1986: YWCA opened its first group home for adults with disabilities who need support.

1991: YWCA opens second group home for adults with disabilities.

1995: YWCA closed its group homes and moved adults with disabilities into their own shared apartments. The YWCA continued to provide in-home support.

1996: The [Alison McAteer House family violence shelter](#) housed at NUP moved into a separate building, specially renovated to provide safety for women and children.

1997: YWCA moved out of Northern United Place to make way for the Aurora College campus. The transitional and emergency housing programs for families moved to the 39-suite Rockhill apartment in Yellowknife.

2000 – 2003: Piloted and tested a trauma recovery program for women with addictions and who have experienced trauma.

2000: YWCA begins offering Project Child Recovery, a program that helps children who have witnessed violence learn the skills to cope with their experiences.



2003: YWCA begins offering in-home support and outreach for people with chronic psychiatric illness. Also purchases the first of five homes for clients who need in-home support.



2006: YWCA offers first Power of Being a Girl Conference for girls ages 12-14 to build confidence and self-esteem.

2007: YWCA co-authored pan-territorial research on homelessness in northern women, exploring causes and urging implementation of key recommendations; report released on Parliament Hill.

2008: YWCA partners with Taiga Adventure Camp to provide a land-based wilderness camp for girls in Fort Smith and offers this camp for the next several years. Taiga later becomes its own entity.

2009: YWCA begins offering GirlSpace empowerment and leadership program to girls ages 8 to 13.

2011: YWCA Yellowknife hosts YWCA Canada's Annual General Meeting general meeting in Yellowknife and Dettah, the first and only time the meeting has been held in Canada's North.

2013: YWCA withdraws from providing housing to people with disabilities and mental health issues to focus on its mission to provide safe shelter and housing to women and families.

2013: Construction begins on the new Betty House, transitional housing for women and women with children.

2014: YWCA opens Lynn's Place/ Hoti Etsanda Kò, (formerly named Betty House), a building containing 18 units for women and their children. Staff provide wraparound support to women who need safe housing after leaving a violent relationship or who are ready to find stability in a safe place.

2015: YWCA publishes *Legal Pathways – Spousal Violence in the NWT, A Resource for Women* to help women leaving a violent relationship to know their rights and for help navigating the legal system.

2016: YWCA commissions a study on the hidden epidemic of sexual assault across the NWT and the needs of women who have experienced assault, titled [*Hush Hush No More*](#).

2017: YWCA takes on operations of the NWT Family Centre and opens Sutherland House, a shelter for women and their children, located in Fort Smith.

2017: YWCA Yellowknife changes its name to YWCA NWT to reflect its broader focus and mandate on working with women and families across the territory.

2018: A devastating fire destroys Rockhill family transitional housing building, including all YWCA NWT administration offices. The loss of the building displaced 33 families and severely impacted operations. YWCA helped re-house many of them in the private rental market the same day of the fire, but the tragedy causes massive operations disruptions for months.

2018 – 2023: YWCA NWT housing staff continue to house families at risk of homelessness in the private rental housing market, while continuously advocating for a new family communal living facility to be able to support families onsite.

2020: The Federal government awards \$1M to YWCA NWT for a pilot project to open Safe Homes in NT communities to find safe spaces for women fleeing violence in small communities with no women's shelter.

2020: [*The Nature of Emergency Protection Orders \(EPOs\) in the NWT*](#) is released, a research paper outlining impact of EPOs to address intimate partner violence and recommendations to promote safety for women across the territory.

2021: YWCA NWT launches awareness campaign about the crisis levels of family homelessness in the territory and the lack of affordable housing.

2022: Construction begins on new 21-unit housing building in downtown Yellowknife, which will also contain YWCA NWT administrative offices.

2023: YWCA launches the [Independent Advice & Representation Program \(ILAR\)](#), offering free legal advice and free legal representation to survivors of violence. The program expands in 2024 to provide counseling support to survivors going through the legal system.

2023: [Community safe homes](#) open in Fort Good Hope and Fort Simpson as a pilot project, following community consultation and Covid delays. These homes offer women experiencing violence options to stay in their home community.



2023: [Gotłı Kò \(Our Path\)](#) opens beside Lynn's Place, with major funding provided by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the City of Yellowknife. Many programs and all staff are under one roof again, along with 21 residences.

2024: YWCA Canada issues formal apology to Indigenous communities for its historical involvement in the operation of residential schools and 'Indian hospitals'. YWCA NWT commits to create a Reconciliation plan including implementation of the Truth & Reconciliation (TRC) Recommendations.

2024: YWCA NWT appoints first in-house Elder to provide feedback and guidance on Indigenous programming and guide work on putting the TRC recommendations in place.

2025: YWCA NWT takes on additional family programming from another social services organization, expanding and re-naming to the [YWCA NWT Family Resource Centre](#), providing programming to pregnant persons and families with young children up to age 6.