

A YEAR OF RESILIENCE

YWCA NWT
ANNUAL
REPORT

*FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING
MARCH 31, 2021*

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD PRESIDENT

This was a year unlike any other and the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, stress and uncertainty for the people we serve and our organization as a whole. Thanks to our strong financial management and pandemic financial support, we were able to weather the storm and are proud to have emerged from the unpredictability of the past year on stable ground. Our team at YWCA NWT showed incredible resilience and strength, constantly pivoting and modifying programs and services to help ensure clients felt safe, supported, and heard.

One thing the pandemic brought to light is the troubling impact it has had on marginalized people across the Northwest Territories. It has also highlighted just how much society relies on non-profits such as the YWCA, and the need for safe and affordable housing, affordable childcare, and options for women experiencing violence. We are hopeful to see changes and progress in the coming years at the societal and government level on these issues and will continue to advocate for the people who need it most.

While the COVID-19 pandemic was at the forefront of everyone's minds, our other work continued. We dove into a pilot project that will see safe homes in three small NWT communities without a women's shelter, continued our advocacy work on family violence and homelessness, and expanded our cultural programming and on-the-land supports for women in our transitional housing program. We also published our research on Emergency Protection Orders and provided recommendations on how to improve the Orders to keep women safer, and launched a campaign for more investments in affordable family housing. Our youth empowerment programs – GirlSpace and Project Child Recovery – returned this year, and we added a parent/infant group at the Family Centre for parents to meet new friends and grow their support networks. It has been a busy year!

We want to thank our northern community and all our donors and contributors for your support and generosity. You have made a difference in the lives of hundreds of women and children who access our programs and enable us to give them the support they deserve. We also want to thank the YWCA NWT Board of Directors for their leadership and our employees for their dedication. Thank you for always going that extra mile to help women and families reach their full potential.



Hawa Dumbuya-Sesay
Executive Director



Sarah Arngna'naaq
President



VISION

Equality for women and girls in a safe Northern society.

MISSION

To help create a safe Northern society for women and families to reach their full potential.

YWCA NWT BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-21

President: Sarah Arngna'naaq

Vice-President: Keelen Simpson

Board members:

Shelby Brothers

Pooja Chugh

Rose Jiang

Rachel MacNeill

Kathy Spooner

Katherine Barton

Kate Reid

RESILIENCY IN ACTION: COVID-19 PANDEMIC

COVID-19 impacted every aspect of our work and the lives of clients and vulnerable people everywhere. While admissions to both our family violence shelters went down, the number of Emergency Protection Orders nearly doubled from the previous year, an indication that women were unable to flee due to abusive partners being home at all times and some were concerned about living in a group setting during the pandemic. YWCA NWT received federal and territorial support to hire additional staff, purchase Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies, and provide essential supplies and food to families in our housing programs. Strict health, safety, and cleaning protocols were immediately put in place to keep our clients and staff safe and all programs remained operational, although most were modified to reduce capacity and to adhere to Public Health directives. We supported many families who had had their employment reduced or terminated during the pandemic with food, essential supplies, and rental assistance to avoid eviction. Families were hit hard as the options to self-isolate were minimal, and the YWCA NWT worked to highlight how the pandemic will make the issue of family hidden homelessness even more dire across the territory.

Through it all, our amazing staff embodied the true meaning of the word resilience, and went above and beyond to provide clients with non-judgemental, ongoing support. The Family Centre and youth programs GirlSpace and Project Child Recovery provided sessions via Zoom and Facebook, family support staff did physically distanced client home visits and food deliveries, and after-school staff ran childcare programs for essential workers.



Many programs shifted to outdoor and on the land to maintain physical distancing protocols.



Families struggled to pay for basic needs during the pandemic. YWCA NWT supplied hundreds of food packages so families didn't go hungry.



Rio Tinto and the YK Community Foundation partnered to donate a vehicle, making home visits and food deliveries easier for housing staff and to ensure clients were supported when office visits just weren't possible.

By the Numbers

Provided **30 after-school spaces** for essential workers between April - July 2020

222 families accessed emergency food and meat boxes

More than **3000 food and meat boxes** distributed to families

Provided **116 families** with literacy kits including books, activities and board games for stay-at-home time

Special thanks to our generous supporters and donors for COVID-19 funding: Government of the Northwest Territories, Government of Canada, City of Yellowknife, Yellowknife Community Foundation Emergency Community Support Fund, United Way Together we are Strong Fund, Breakfast Club of Canada COVID-19 Emergency food fund, DeBeers Group, Rio Tinto Diavik Diamond Mines Inc, Women's Shelters Canada



By the Numbers

Housed **96 families**

136 adults

193 children

Prevented **80 families** from becoming homeless by paying outstanding rent and/or utilities

Helped **39 people** find employment through our training and job placement program

116 families had a more joyful Christmas through our community sponsorship program

Distributed **3,062 food hampers** to families

Housed **26 women** and their **14 children** at Lynn's Place Transitional Housing

HOUSING

A core element of our mandate is providing transitional and emergency housing to women and families. Our focus is on housing families in high need, and our family support staff work with each individual and family on issues that have caused their housing to destabilize in the past such as debt, rental arrears, addictions, family violence or separation, disability and other factors. At Lynn's Place, we also work with women who need safe housing after leaving a violent relationship, or who are ready to find stability in a safe environment.

This past year we saw more families with food insecurity issues and concerns in meeting even their basic needs such as food, rent, and children's supplies, and upwards of 50 families weekly came to us for food. Client families were hit hard during the pandemic, and continue to feel the effects of job loss, isolation, and the increased responsibility and mental health stresses of schooling at home. The pandemic forced us to reduce our in-person programming but we kept our service delivery strong by doing physically distanced visits at clients homes and lots of phone calls.

Without a central family housing facility, we have continued to operate a housing model where families are living in private rental housing. Relationship building with landlords has been crucial in getting families in highest need housed quickly, so they are not homeless or staying in an unsafe situation. We continued to advocate for more affordable housing options for families, and are working to raise funds for a multi-unit family housing facility. At any given time, we had between 50-90 families on a housing wait list.



A SAFE PLACE TO GO

YWCA NWT operates two family violence shelters in the Northwest Territories, located in Yellowknife (Alison McAteer House, 12 beds) and Fort Smith (Sutherland House, 8 beds). Both shelters are staffed 24/7 by skilled staff and trauma support workers.

Many communities have no family violence shelters, limited RCMP presence, and few mental health support services. YWCA NWT staff fielded many calls on our crisis support line this past year from women in smaller communities seeking information about Emergency Protection Orders to keep themselves and their children safe while their abuser was at home all the time due to the pandemic. Isolation put women at increased risk of violence and we continued to work with women to make safety plans and when possible, stay at one of our family violence shelters or at another safe place.

Our shelter capacity was reduced due to physical distancing restrictions, and many women expressed concern about staying in a group setting and fear of contracting COVID-19. YWCA staff had strict screening and cleaning protocols in place and although we had a decrease in the women staying in our shelters, the rate of Emergency Protection Orders granted nearly doubled and we continued to work with women impacted by family violence.

By the Numbers

121 women admitted to shelters with their **65 children**, many between the ages of infant to 4 years old

Answered **2276 calls** on 24/7 crisis line

Information was given to women **539 times** about Emergency Protection Orders

Kept **106 women** safe from their abuser through an Emergency Protection Order

Number of NWT communities: **33**

Number of NWT communities with safe shelters for women and their children: **5**



By the Numbers

Family Centre

179 caregivers/parents
attended programming with
their **222 children**
77 new families registered

After-school Care

Attended by **272 children**
15 programs in Yellowknife
schools
30 childcare spaces provided
for essential workers during
school shutdowns

Youth Empowerment

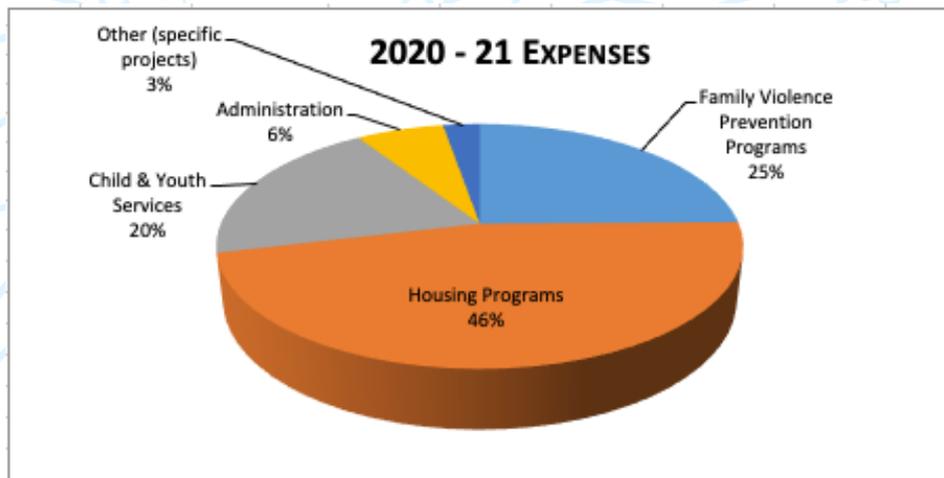
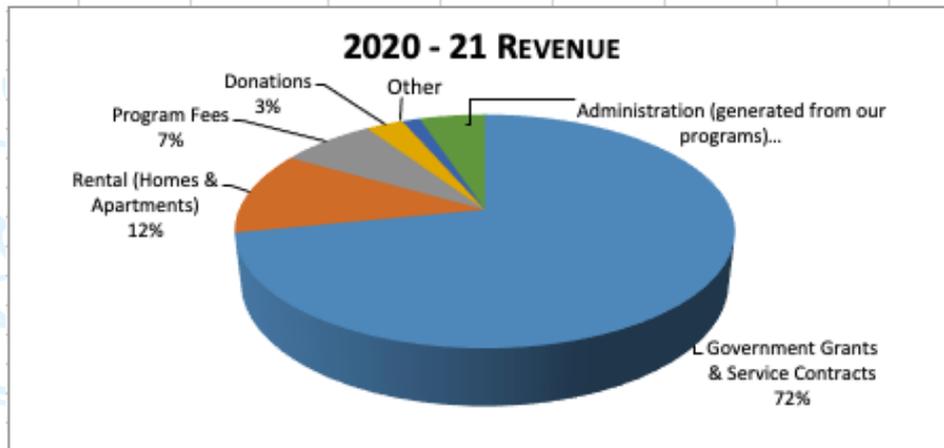
40 youth benefitted from
programming at GirlSpace,
and **28 youth** at Project Child
Recovery

OUR CHILDREN, OUR FUTURE

This was a year of change, upheaval and constant pivoting for our children and youth programs. The closure of Yellowknife schools also meant the closure of our after-school childcare programs, which caused understandable challenges for parents. Strict protocols were put in place to adhere to public health orders to keep children and YWCA staff safe that included masking, physical distancing, cleaning procedures, and daily temperature checks. Since our after-school childcare programs are licensed, we must maintain certain ratios of staff to children. When YWCA NWT staff had to take sick time for COVID-19 symptoms or for self-isolation requirements, this also meant that after-school childcare programs would close with limited notice to ensure safe ratios were kept. YWCA NWT worked with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and local schools to provide childcare spaces for essential healthcare workers during school closures.

Caretakers and parents love the YWCA NWT Family Centre, and the groups provided an opportunity for parents to grow their support networks and access educational resources and fun programming and activities. While in-person activities were limited this past year, staff held some outdoor and physically distanced activities. Our popular youth empowerment programs - GirlSpace and Project Child Recovery (Dudes Club) came back this year after a brief hiatus, and staff of Family Centre and youth programs moved locations twice last year, while also planning and delivering creative programs online through Zoom and Facebook.

To best serve the community and our clients and provide transparency to donors and supporters we carefully track our revenues and expenses. Your continued support helps ensure hundreds of women, children and families in the Northwest Territories can access the programs and services they need and deserve.



Revenue		
Government Grants & Service Contracts	\$ 4,956,427	72%
Rental (Homes & Apartments)	\$ 793,685	12%
Program Fees	\$ 504,202	7%
Donations	\$ 198,985	3%
Other	\$ 95,271	1%
Administration (generated from our programs)	\$ 349,567	5%
Total	\$ 6,898,136	100%

Expenses		
Family Violence Prevention Programs	\$ 1,587,440	25%
Housing Programs	\$ 2,970,834	46%
Child & Youth Services	\$ 1,258,441	20%
Administration	\$ 411,654	6%
Other (specific projects)	\$ 172,746	3%
Total	\$ 6,401,115	100%

THANK YOU

Thank you to our major funders for your support and generosity. We couldn't do it without you. And thank you to our generous Northern community for heeding our calls for help. Because of you, families had a warm meal, a more joyful Christmas, and a place to call home. It really does take a village, and we are so grateful for this village of wonderful people who help us do the work we do, each and every day.

Special thanks to:

Bell Canada Let's Talk Community Fund

Breakfast Club of Canada

Canadian Women's Foundation

City of Yellowknife

DeBeers Group

Field Law

Government of Canada

Government of the Northwest Territories

On the Land Collaborative

Rio Tinto Diavik Diamond Mines Inc

United Way NWT

Women's Shelters Canada

Yellowknife Community Foundation and Community Foundations of Canada

Get in touch!



ywcanwt



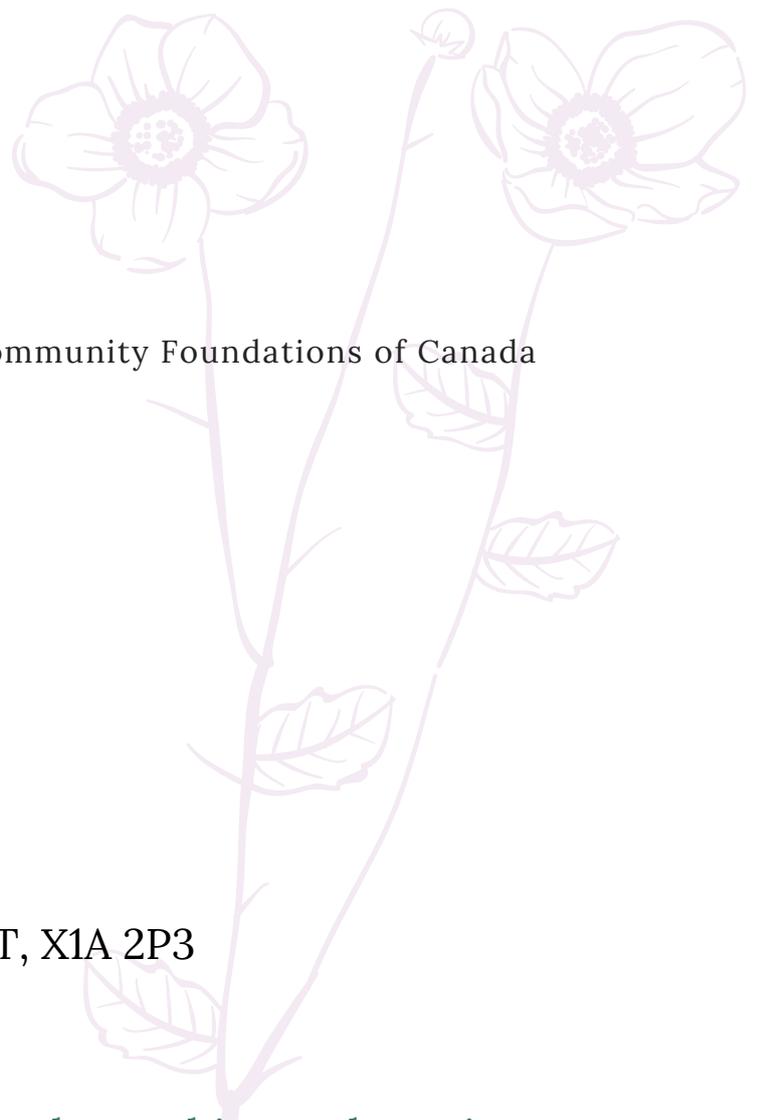
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