

## WE ARE LIVING IN CHALLENGING TIMES!

Scarborough Women's Centre has supported women to build brighter futures for themselves and their families for more than 38 years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have taken measures recommended by government and international agencies to social distance and work remotely. Our physical office has been closed to visitors, but staff continue to provide service so that women can get the information, education and support they need to cope with the challenges they face.

Our counsellors have been meeting women by phone and web-conference since mid-March, and we started providing webinars in May, once we had educated ourselves on the best solution to protect service user privacy and confidentiality while offering an engaging and meaningful learning opportunity. Volunteer mentors are still meeting with women in transition by phone, and the Young Women's Outreach and Outreach to Women with Disabilities continue actively. Even our AGM was held virtually, with long-time friend of the Centre, Mary Heinmaa, as our keynote speaker.

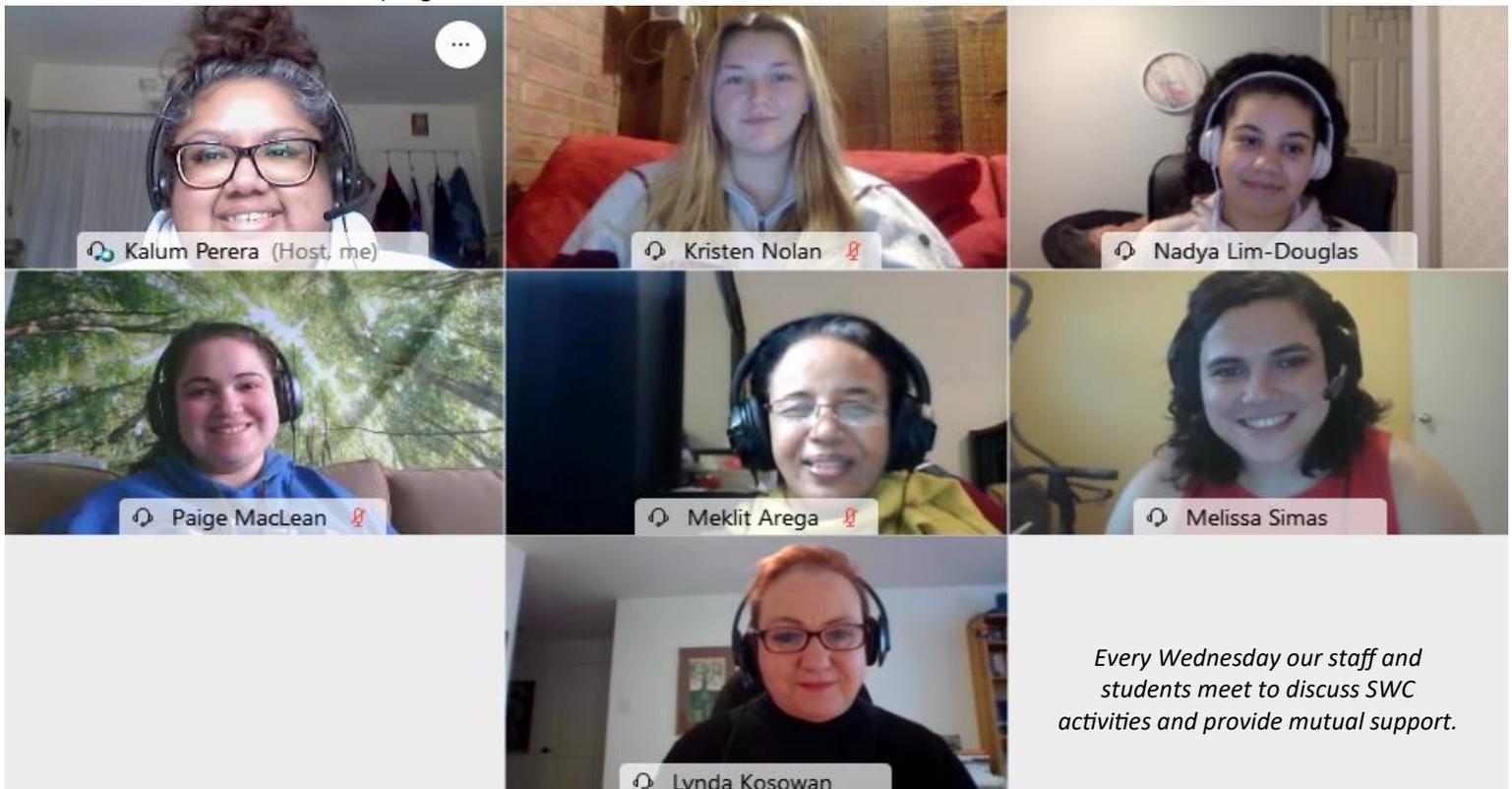
You can hear more about these programs in the articles

contained in this newsletter. All of our services continue to be free to make them accessible to women in need of support.

I'm sure you will be pleased that staff, facilitators, and volunteers have adapted so quickly to address barriers to women's empowerment. The women using our services have also bravely explored new opportunities for growth. We thank the Board, committees, platform providers, funders and donors who stepped up to help in so many generous ways. The final page of the newsletter gives a shout-out to these wonderful folks. None of this would have been possible without each and every one of you!

Hopefully by the time you receive our next newsletter, we will already have welcomed folks into the Centre physically, even while we continue to offer a hybrid of online and in person supports. Know that you are always welcome. Your support and care mean so much!

**Lynda Kosowan**, MSW, RSW, Executive Director  
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*Every Wednesday our staff and students meet to discuss SWC activities and provide mutual support.*

## DEALING WITH THE STRANGE & NEW

To express one's feelings right now during these times would be extremely difficult. Especially finding the right words or intensity. I can see signs of intense anger in myself and in others. Frustration, hurt feelings, irritability etc. If I didn't list your particular set of emotions feel free to list yours. All these can be a result of dealing with situations which we all find strange and new.

The important thing to keep in mind is that you have feelings. Identify them, assess them, and moderate them, so they are back under control. When you can no longer regulate your emotions, that is the point where you know that you need to check in with your doctor. Keeping in mind that the doctors also need to have a break as well!!!!

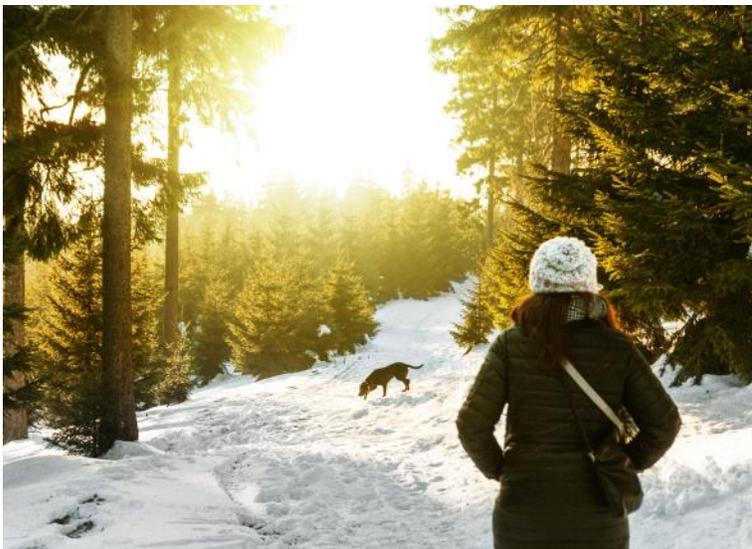
Do not expect to be positive all the time. You may feel very gloomy often or at times. Process your feelings then try to do something that you enjoy. Select an activity that does not require others or something that could be closed due to COVID. Do self-care. Limit contact with others if you are having conflicts. If you are feeling too isolated, go outside for some air. Walk around and enjoy nature. Pay attention to the change of seasons and enjoy! I was told during the last plague some of the famous writers composed some of their best works. What do you want to do that marks this time period in a positive way?

Life has meaning as you contemplate what you want to do today and actually do it! Tomorrow will take care of itself!

**Jacynth Fennell**, Counsellor

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Our Counselling program is made possible thanks to the Government of Ontario-Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (Women's Issues), the City of Toronto, United Way Greater Toronto, Bell Let's Talk, Royal LePage Shelter Foundation, Ontario Realtors Care Foundation, Shoppers Drug Mart Life Foundation, Tippet Foundation, and other generous individuals and groups. Thank you!

## YOU ARE ALREADY RICH



This is probably one of the most unusual times to make such a bold statement. The world has experienced losses and indescribable stressors throughout the past year. The global pandemic has taken its toll and there are very few people who have not been impacted in some way. Countless jobs have terminated,

businesses closed, and lives lost. What we had previously known to be the (somewhat predictable) circumstances of our world have been altered in very significant ways. Yet somehow, we need to find a way to move through these uncertain times. One of the best places to begin is by working towards a shift in our view of these events within our lives. Is it possible to adopt a perspective that you are already rich when we are exposed to daily reminders of adversity, limitations, and loss?

Quite often feeling "prosperous" starts with a state of mind, then often manifests itself in other ways. Many people found their unique internal prosperity first then that became the source for their external prosperity (whatever they defined that to be). According to Lynne Twist in *The Soul of Money*, "What you appreciate – appreciates". From her research, Lynne's greatest lesson was that there are many people who are "rich" without the financial resources commonly associated with this term. At the other end of the spectrum were those who had enormous financial resources yet were not happy. In other words, true personal wealth stems from within and endures the storms that might arise in life.

Too many people characterize themselves based solely on income and assets. I want you to know that you are much more than your finances and what you believe to be lacking. Your identity and value is much greater. Go ahead. Think big. But don't buy into the notion that you are worth less until you have financial wealth. Great things flow from gratitude in the present. As Harvard Medical School noted, "Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships." Try to find the richness that already exists in spite of the challenges.

**Carol Soares**, RSW, Counsellor

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*Twist, Lynne. Reprint edition (2017). The Soul of Money: Reclaiming the Wealth of Inner Resources. WW Norton.*

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier>

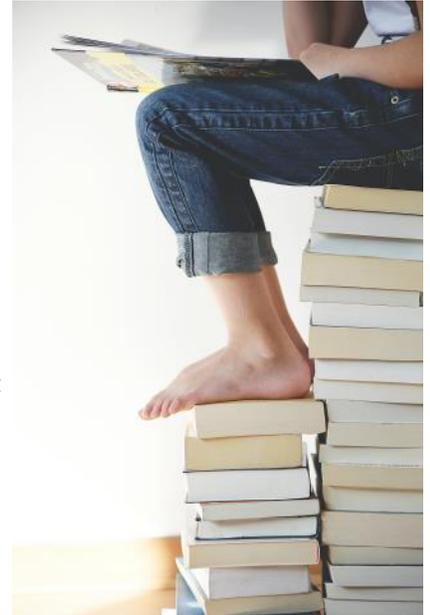
# A LESSON ON RESILIENCE FROM THE YOUNG WOMEN OF SCARBOROUGH

Hello! My name is Nadya Lim-Douglas. I started working with Scarborough Women's Centre as a youth worker on the Summer 2020 staff team. It was a wonderful experience working with the young women in the Building Strong Futures: Young Women's Outreach program. One thing we did this past summer was start a book club. The first book we read was *Scarborough* by Catherine Hernandez. As someone born and raised in Scarborough, this book really hit home. What left the greatest impression on me was the way that Hernandez was able to accurately capture the resilient spirit of young people in Scarborough. The young people in this novel face countless obstacles, whether those are obstacles within or outside their families, part of their social class, racial, gender, or sexual identities. Not all of them are able to deal with these obstacles, but Hernandez presents some characters who confront the difficult things in their lives and work towards improving them.

In September, I was honoured to be offered the opportunity to become the project coordinator of Building Strong Futures. During the last few months of working with the program, I can certainly attest to the fact that the stories of resilience in Hernandez's novel are not fiction. 2020 has been a year that presented obstacles no one could have predicted or prepared for. Like the characters in Hernandez's novel, the young women of Building Strong Futures have proven time and time again that they cannot be stopped.

I have also learned an important lesson on resilience from the young women. Resilience is less about one's ability to simply

endure, and more about one's ability to bounce back from difficult times. They demonstrated this to me by refusing to let the pandemic get in the way of their fight to improve the future for themselves and their communities. Young women gravitate towards our program not only to combat social isolation, but also because they are driven to make a difference. Despite the obstacles that they face, they are still eager to find ways to engage in their community and fight for a brighter future. That's resilience. It is exactly this type of resilience that makes me proud to be a young woman from Scarborough, and to be a part of such a wonderful program.



**Nadya Lim-Douglas**, Program Coordinator,  
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*Thank you to Mackenzie Investments and The Johansen-Larsen Foundation for your continued support of our program!*

## ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Did you know that:

- Women with disabilities are twice as likely as those who do not have a disability to be the victims of violent crimes<sup>1</sup>
- Women with disabilities face more barriers in leaving abusive situations as both disability services and services for victims of abuse are not always able to respond to the unique needs of women with disabilities<sup>1</sup>
- It has been estimated that 276,000 women in Canada will experience a traumatic brain injury annually as a result of intimate partner violence<sup>1</sup>
- Gender-based violence has intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic

In September 2020, our Expanding the Reach: Outreach to Women with Disabilities program received funding from the Canadian Women's Foundation to facilitate a



three-year project that will address gender-based violence experienced by women with visible and invisible disabilities. This will be achieved by:

- Facilitating educational webinars for women with disabilities that will increase their awareness of gender-based violence
- Organizing leadership development opportunities that will support women with disabilities to take on leadership roles throughout the project
- Developing interactive training sessions for service providers that will increase their capacity to support women with disabilities who may be experiencing violence
- Creating resources for use by women with disabilities and service providers during and once the project ends

To learn more about our project, please contact Melissa Simas by email at [program@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca](mailto:program@scarboroughwomenscentre.ca) or by calling 416-439-7111 x 3.

*Thank you to our project partners and to the Canadian Women's Foundation for supporting women with disabilities!*

**Melissa Simas**, MSW, RSW  
Program Coordinator, Expanding the Reach!

<sup>1</sup> Disabled Women's Network Canada, *More Than a Footnote*, 2018

# OUR GENEROUS DONORS - THANK YOU!

## GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada, Service Canada, The Government of Ontario - Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (Women's Issues), City of Toronto-Community Service Partnership Program, City of Toronto-Investing in Neighbourhoods Program

## FOUNDATIONS & N.G.O.s

The Canadian Women's Foundation, GIVE Foundation, The Johansen-Larsen Foundation, Lee Tak Wai Foundation, Mackenzie Investments Charitable Foundation, Ontario Realtors Care Foundation, St. Andrew's Charitable Foundation, Royal LePage Shelter Foundation, Shoppers Drug Mart LIFE Foundation, Tippet Foundation, United Way Greater Toronto

## CORPORATIONS & BUSINESSES

Amazon Canada, Atlantic Packaging Products Ltd., Bell Canada, CBA Management Services, CIBC (*in recognition of Elaine Dandy*), Claren Inc., ivari (*in recognition of Carolyn Ling*), Jessica Laforet Photography, Kissan International (Canada) Inc., Lowe's Canada, Morrison Hershfield Limited (*in memory of Tina Lu*), Park Property Management Incorporated, Prefera Finance Ltd. (*in recognition of Genevieve Calautti*), Price Waterhouse Cooper (*in recognition of Angela Laarakkers*), Scarborough Shoppers Drug Mart Stores, SKF Canada Limited, Sweet Caroline Café, TD Scarborough West District, RONA Home & Garden - Scarborough Midland, Royal LePage Estate Realty, Toron-AMI, Unifor Social Justice Fund, Wellwise by Shoppers-Scarborough

## GROUPS

Agincourt Civitan Club, Canadian Federation of University Women (Scarborough Chapter), Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, Elementary Teachers of Toronto, Friends In Memory of Bianca Sicoli, IAM Union Local 2113, The Rotary Club of Agincourt, Scarborough Guildwood Women's Federal Liberal Club, U of T Accessibility Services Trivia Team (*Reshma, Amreen, Carrie, Reggie, Alexa & Rozmin*)

## INDIVIDUALS

Anonymous, Joanna Abdulhamid, Oddhay Adhikary, Sreyas Adusumilli, Robbie Ahmed, Prabjit Ajrawat, Lamia Akbar, Vicki Alexopoulos, Shaima Al-Khalili, Katharine Allan, Chantelle Anderson, Alexandra Anoufrieva, Onsia Ansari, Amandeep Bagri, Stephen Bell, Caroline Blanchette Blasi, Hailey Boccone, Elfriede, Marina & Sue Boehm, Jennifer Bonsu, Anna Bortolus, Joe C., Antara Chatterjee, Christiana Chen, Samantha Clarke, Ruvette Coelho, Janel Collins, Teri Corea, Liza Cote, Aleksandar Crnatovic, Elaine Dandy, Kirsten de los Reyes, Cheryl L. Denomy, Reshma Dhrodia, Brenda Dipasquale, Ashley Dresser, Levy Ebola, Kim Evinsky, Dandi Feng, Loretta Fines, Kalliopi Frangos, Christina Friend & Andrew Johnston, Reem Gedeon, Keet Geniza, Tara George, Geraldine Gerardo, Suzanne Gibson, Karen Grimshaw, Zainab Habib, Sunita Hanlon, Arthur & Mary Heinmaa, Aly Hemraj, Debbie Herridge, Julie Hiroz, Rebecca Holland, Victoria Hong, Lisa Horrocks, Anika Hossain, Wai Man (Ray) Hui, Teegan Ignacy, Lauren & Andrew Inouye, Michelle Indyarta, Jamie Lynn Juarez, Kourosh Kanani, Arooba Khan, Kathy Killinger, Lynda Kosowan, Marcela Kupfer, Joanne Lafreniere, Lisa La Horey, Helen Lambropoulos, Rosalyn Lee, Venesse Lewis, Charlene Lilly, Ying Ping (Lillian) Li, Carolyn Ling, Dom Lisi, Conan MacLean, Fritz Manguerra, Judit Marincan, Douglas Mark, Nancy Maxwell, Jane McLellan, Lyn McDonell, Deborah McKeague, Jyothi Menezes, Jason Merai, Chanel Mills, Jyoti Minhas, Annisa Mohammed, Catherine Molyneux, Farah Mustafa, Marzia Mustafa, Sara Mustafa, Shyam Nagarajan, Wanjiro Ndungu, Lina Neaga, Janice Nicholson, Dele Ojelabi, David Pauli, Jessica Pellow, Merissa Gladys Peña, Joan Phillips, Jovita Pinto, Judith-Karin Poku, Beth Purdon-McLellan, Ben Rastin, Danyal Rawjani, Laila Rawjani, Jerusha Retnakanthan, Heerea Rikhranj, Humaira Saeed, Avani Sapre, Caroline Scott, Neeti Sharma, Jennifer Shen, Linda Sicoli, Sheryll Smith, Karen Spencer-Goslin, Shawn Stillman, Penelope Stuart, Nadia Taylor, Anna & Michael Thompson, Kimberly Thompson, Taylor Thompson, Rebecca Toda Worden, Aarsh Trivedi, Dimitra Tsagaris, Siena Turnbull, Ena Ujjic, Allison Ullrich, Liliana Vera-Montano, Maggie Vernon, Aylin Visram, Tiana Vuckovic, Olivia Waterman, Alison Williams, Catherine Willshire, Joanna Wright, Sakib Yasar, Chantel Zamora, Lucy Zuccherato

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## EXTERNAL EVENTS

Cupcake Fundraiser (*Sweet Caroline Café*), Krispy Kreme Holiday Fundraiser, Lowe's Canada Heroes Campaign, "Unplugged" Online Benefit Concert (*Royal LePage Estate Realty*)

## SUPPORT THE CENTRE!

Scarborough Women's Centre assists women and girls to become economically and emotionally independent, and free from violence. You can help support this mission by making a donation to our work. Secure online donations can be made here: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/scarborough-womens-centre/>.

You can also make a donation by mailing a cheque to:

**Scarborough Women's Centre**  
**2100 Ellesmere Rd., Suite 245**  
**Scarborough, ON M1H 3B7**

## BECOME A MEMBER!

Have your say in our future. Attend our Annual General meeting and vote on the structure of our charity and ongoing activities. Annual membership fees can be waived for active volunteers and clients who are not able to pay. All fees collected will be directed towards programming.

Find our membership form here:

[www.scarboroughwomenscentre.ca/become-a-member/](http://www.scarboroughwomenscentre.ca/become-a-member/)