

Annual Report 2016 - 2017



Empowered Women. Healthy Community.

"The education and empowerment of women throughout the world cannot fail to result in a more caring, tolerant, just and peaceful life for all."

Aung San Suu Kyi

Update From the Co-Chairs

This year has been one of major transition for the Women's Centre. Our co-chairs, Bobbie Ogletree and Erin Rooney, said goodbye to us and hello to new adventures after 6 years (2 as Co-chairs) on the Coordinating Collective (CC)! We'd like to extend a thank you to Bobbie and Erin for their dedication to the Centre over the course of their time here.

Andrea Hyde and Stephanie Andrade e Castro are honoured to be filling the co-chair seats. We had some amazing women move on to other journeys, some short and sweet relationships and some enduring ones. Many new CC members joined us less than a year ago, bringing new ideas and fresh perspectives, while the remaining members keep us grounded with their experience and insights. All are dedicated to helping ensure the wellbeing of all self-identified women and children.

Our drop-in remains an integral program offering resources and support. We received funding this year to allow us to expand the drop-in one day a week, opening it to all trans and gender diverse folk. This same funding permits us to host community engagement sessions in an effort to support the trans and non-binary community. We look forward to engaging with this process in a meaningful way, expanding our platform to include all people negatively affected by heteropatriarchy (anti-feminist oppression).

One of our biggest challenges besides the usual non-profit struggles of covering operating costs is ensuring inclusivity. We are working on increasing the inclusivity of the space for more marginalized and diverse groups of women. This is an ongoing process that requires continually hard, meaningful work and reflection by staff and the CC.

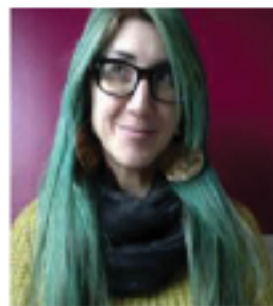
We are astonished at how much the staff accomplish! There is always something happening at the Women's Centre: workshops, such as Healthy Women, Healthy Communities and My Grandmother's Kitchen; groups like the Girl's Empowerment Movement (GEM); events such as Womagination; and supporting projects like "The Blood of Life".

The weekly Drop-In never ceases to amaze us. Our drop-in has knowledgeable and compassionate staff that provide supports for all self-identifying women and children. Food and clothing are free, referrals and resources are available, there is support for disclosures of violence, and we work with our community agencies to provide educational and volunteer training.

Of course, we would like to thank Lisa McGeady, our Executive Director, who works tirelessly to ensure the Centre runs smoothly. We are grateful for her open-mindedness, supporting her staff in ways that encourage and empower them, allowing them to do the amazing job that they do. A sure sign of a good ED are staff that are feeling valued and heard.

One of our goals this year is to create more spaces for community engagement and open public dialogue on issues related to feminism (this list is extensive!), and we are interested in receiving feedback on how we can better support this growing community.

Andrea Hyde



Stephanie
Andrade e Castro

Meet the Staff of the Nelson & District Women's Centre

Lisa McGeady,
Executive Director



Andrea Hernandez,
Drop-In Coordinator



Shannon Dikkema,
Volunteer & Event
Coordinator



Raina Garder,
GEM Coordinator



Jen Gawne,
My Grandmother's
Kitchen Facilitator



Stephanie Campbell
Executive Assistant



Elijah Zimmerman
Trans Drop-in
Coordinator



Kristina Morgan
Trans volunteer
Coordinator



Clelie
Book keeper



Highlights

This year in Drop In there have been a variety of new services, resources and events available to Women, including:

- Bio Cranio Sacral Therapy: free 45 minute sessions offered once per month during Drop In Hours
- Drop In Art Therapy: Afternoon sessions ran this fall/winter & spring. A big thank you to the Kutenai Art Therapy Centre.
- Reiki Sessions: free 45 minute sessions offered on the last Tuesday of each month during Drop In
- RMT Massage Therapy: free 50 minute sessions offered once per month during Drop In
- Self Care Days: 3 times per year during the spring, summer and fall/winter; our first was held December 2016 & then in March for International Women's Day. "Self Care Days" allow women with limited income to engage in healthy Self Care practices, and creates a safe welcoming space for women to connect with other women. This event has included: Eyebrow Threading; Hair Styles and Cuts; RMT & Ayurvedic Massage; Thai Yoga Foot Massage; Guided Meditations; Yoga classes; Reiki; and Bio Cranio Sacral Therapy.
- Ted X women 2017 movie nights. A series of 4 movie nights with preview of Ted-X women segments & topic dialogue.
- Consent workshops and outreach events at LV Rogers. Facilitated conversations with high school students about consent & respect
- Archival project completion. The 44 years of women's centre archives was categorized by Gitta Ridder thanks to a grant from CKCA. They are now stored at Touchstones Nelson and are accessible to the

Events

Our Annual Take Back the Night event - attended this year by over 60 community supporters!

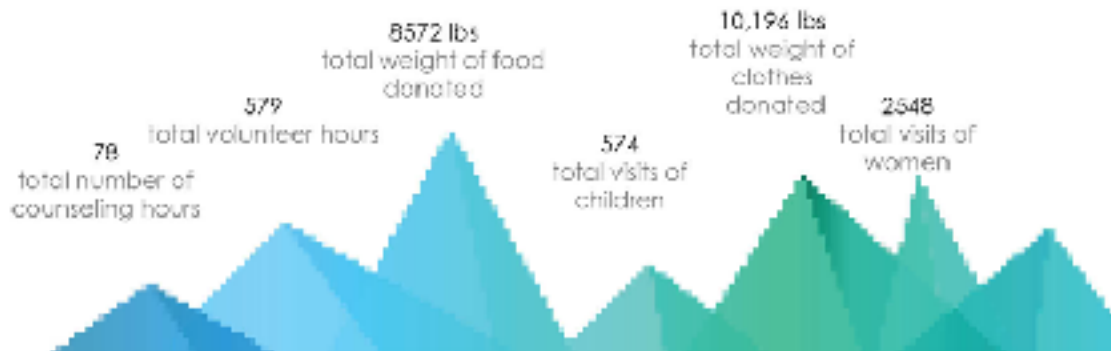
Womaginarium 2016 - Another sold out event & great night of fun and entertainment with all local talent

Mark your calendar for Womaginarium 2017
November 17, 2017

International Women's Day event: Held at the Eagles hall, a night of spoken word, poetry, singing & 5 feminist minutes

Coming this August 25-27 2017
Womaginarium, 1st annual SUMMER WOMEN'S FESTIVAL

Drop- In



The Drop-In at the Women's Centre has been serving the Kootenay community since 1972, making it the longest standing rural women's Drop-in space in all of Canada. The Drop-in is a welcoming space located at 420 Mill St, offering a variety of free resources and support for women in the Kootenay community. The Drop-in is currently open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM, and offers:

- A free clothing store for women and children
- Free coffee, tea and snacks
- Free nutritious food to take home
- Access to computers and internet and library
- Information; health, financial assistance, employment, housing and abuse
- Compassionate peer counseling
- Volunteer Opportunities
- A children's play area

The Drop-in is open to all women. It is a place to relax, nourish yourself and build a community with other women.

Rooted In Community

Facilitated by Shannon Dikkema

This year, Rooted In Community ran 3 times. There were a total of 40 participants over the three sessions. Of those 40, 23 women continue to volunteer with us on a regular basis.

Our workshops included presentations from Nelson Community Services, Women's Outreach and Stopping the Violence counselors, Trans 101 workshops, In Her Shoes (transition house staff run workshop about women who leave abusive relationships), info sessions from the Advocacy Centre, self care for activists and those who care, orientation to the history of the Womens' Centre and what we do, presentations from Ann Harvey from the Committee on Homelessness, Nalaxone trainings, ANKORS, presentations and chances to learn peer support and counseling skills. The feedback from these sessions has been very positive.



My Grandmother's Kitchen

Facilitated by Jen Gawne



The workshops this year have been enjoyable and well attended. The topics ranged from Healing Broths and Brews to Indian and Swiss Food and the art of the samosa. The average attendance was 10 people and open to all genders. Usually about half the group are return participants and half have never been to the cooking classes or to the centre at all. Each class the natural flow of conversation comes around to what happens at the women's centre and discussion of programs and opportunities. Most participants do not find the \$5 fee to be a hardship, and most hear about the workshops via women's centre Facebook

posts or the website event calendar.

Curious? Want to be involved? We are always looking for senior women volunteers who would like to share their kitchen knowledge and cooking skills, as well as young women who desire to learn these kitchen and gardening skills in order to ensure food security for themselves and their families.



TRACES -Trans Resource and Community Engagement Space

Facilitated by Elijah Zimmerman

Continuing community consultation has led the Centre to broaden its mandate through the creation of TRACES, the Trans Resource and Community Engagement Space, with the financial support of the Columbia Basin Trust. We have hosted information sessions aimed at fostering greater understanding of the needs of trans and gender-diverse members of the community, and in January opened our drop in program one extra day a week to welcome those community members to access our resources. The TRACES drop-in includes access to the free store, peer counselling and space to socialize and share a meal together in a safe, welcoming space, as well as weekly social activities organized by the drop-in coordinator.

Girls Empowerment Movement

Facilitated by Raina Gardner

The Girls' Empowerment Movement (GEM) ran three programs in the 2016/17 school year in different locations: Nelson, Kaslo, and Slocan. In each program, women from the local community joined the girls to offer their skills, experience, and wisdom.

The program is a series of arts- and movement-based workshops for girls aged 10 to 13 to explore themes of body image, the beauty myth, relationships, holistic health, and growing up. Activities included pottery, dance, yoga, collage art, herbal medicine making, self-defense training, non-violent communication skills, singing, and drama.



We had 41 girls attend from 9 different schools as well as some homeschoolers. The feedback from parents was that the program increased confidence and social skills for the girls, and the girls loved the art, games, food, and getting to know other girls their age. The "tween" years are a pivotal time for girls, as their identity and self-esteem are changing alongside their development into young women. Giving girls the opportunity to talk about their experiences and learn supportive ways of being themselves can make the difference in helping them thrive through this transition.



We are excited to be offering this program again in several different locations around the West Kootenays in the 2017/2018 school year, as well as working towards launching a program for teen girls. Watch for dates and locations on the Nelson & District Women's Centre web site!

Interview with Amanda

What has kept you coming to the Women's Centre?

My favorite thing about the WC is that it is both literally and figuratively a home. If you don't have a fully formed home in Nelson the WC can be that place for you. There is food, clothing, fellowship, a garden, and different supports and counseling you can access and if you are in dire straights, you can access resources for shelter and housing through the women's centre. In a world where we don't sit around the hearth very much anymore, the WC can sorta be that place that is a home to many different women. I really appreciate that it is a converted house that serves as a home to not just one person/family but many women & children in our community.

What is your Fondest Memory of the Women's Centre?

Well there are actually two. The first is through some of the art therapy that was happening here. There were some really profound moments, which of course are confidential so can't be shared, but women would come week after week to work on art projects. Doing the art, poetry, creating books and journals, was obviously a release and a grounding that some of those women really needed. Some of the moments shared in that group were really moving. The second one is from the Rooted In Community training. Different speakers come in to teach us more about community services & resources. The most profound one for me was when a person from ANKORS came to train us on the naloxone kits. I had no idea how many people were dying from the opioid epidemic, or how anyone of us could be the accidental responder to someone in an emergency situation. We need to know how to use those kits because we could be the person who could save a life. So just... getting that real, that gritty about what it means to be in community with people in Nelson, that was a really intense and profound experience at the WC.

How does the women's centre make a difference in your day to day life/what aspect/program are you most grateful for/important/necessary to you?

I really appreciate the Drop In Time. I am unemployed at the moment. My schedule is flexible so I can take part in a lot of different activities. I can pop in and out. It's really grounding for me to have this as part of my daily schedule. I also don't have a car so I can still walk over in between doing things throughout the day, to have some food, meet new women, and check on the different events that are happening. It's a great stop over and transition between the business of downtown and the isolation of home.

Any other comments: Yeah, the other thing is just encouraging the community to think about ongoing funding for this community place of house and home! To be members, donors, volunteers or to just get engaged in one way or another. We may not like the reality of the material world, but it does require resources to run the womens centre. If you can get more people involved in keeping the centre running, then I think it is just one of those pay it forward things. Being involved helps people to feel good and a part of their community.

Other Things Happening

Peer Counseling is offered at the Centre during dedicated times twice a week. There are designated Drop-in times or by appointment when women can access a friendly listening ear and resource referral from our dedicated and trained volunteers.

Healthy Women, Healthy Communities Each month, the Women's Centre hosts a health and personal development based workshop facilitated by a skilled woman in our community, who is donating her time. The participants make a donation to the Centre in order to access these great workshops. They are a time for connection, learning and are barrier free health and wellness experiences and information. time for connection, learning and barrier free health and wellness experiences and information.



Volunteer team. This year has been a great year of volunteers. With most of our volunteers coming to gain new skills and make meaningful community connections, we have a committed crew of helpers. We have started doing monthly volunteer potlucks, which are opportunities to debrief, be social and develop new skills. Each month a different presenter comes for the last hour to introduce our volunteers to new information or skills. These potlucks have been well attended and fun events. Our volunteers have also been doing an exceptional job in Drop-In, creating a caring space, preparing good food and helping orient women to the resources in town. We have also had some health practitioners join our team of volunteers. During Drop In hours, they offer biodynamic cranial sacral therapy, massage, reiki and Relational Somatic Therapy (registered therapeutic counseling).

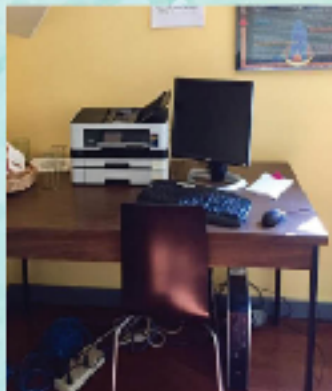
Community Threads is offered at the Centre every Friday morning. Women of all skill levels drop in to work on textile projects of various kinds, from sewing, knitting and quilting to crochet and weaving. This is a casual drop-in program designed to give everyone access to sewing and textile supplies but also to allow women to share their skills and learn from each other in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.

Company Of Older Women is a feminist social group that has been meeting monthly for some years, at the Women's Centre on the first Monday of the month in the fall and winter, and often in other locations in spring and summer. We occasionally go to Castlegar for a show at the Kootenay Gallery, or to Lakeside Park to enjoy summer days. We enjoy a good discussion about a timely topics, or talk about the merits of a favorite book, or celebrate our birthdays. Anyone who considers herself an older woman can join us!

...continued

West Kootenay Women's Association Archives

The Nelson Women's Centre (1973) is the oldest rural Women's Centre in Canada. West Kootenay Women's Association was formed in 1974 and became the mother organization of the Nelson Women's Centre. Last year the Centre received a grant to sort through the 105 boxes of material that had been collected over the years which are filled with the unique history of rural feminism in B.C. The material has now been sorted, catalogued and properly archived, and has been moved to the Touchstones Nelson Museum of Art and History Archives to be preserved for many years to come. We'd like to thank Gitta Ridder for all her work on this project. Best of all, this collection will form the basis of an exciting new exhibition on Kootenay's unique brand of rural feminism, coming to the Touchstones gallery next year.

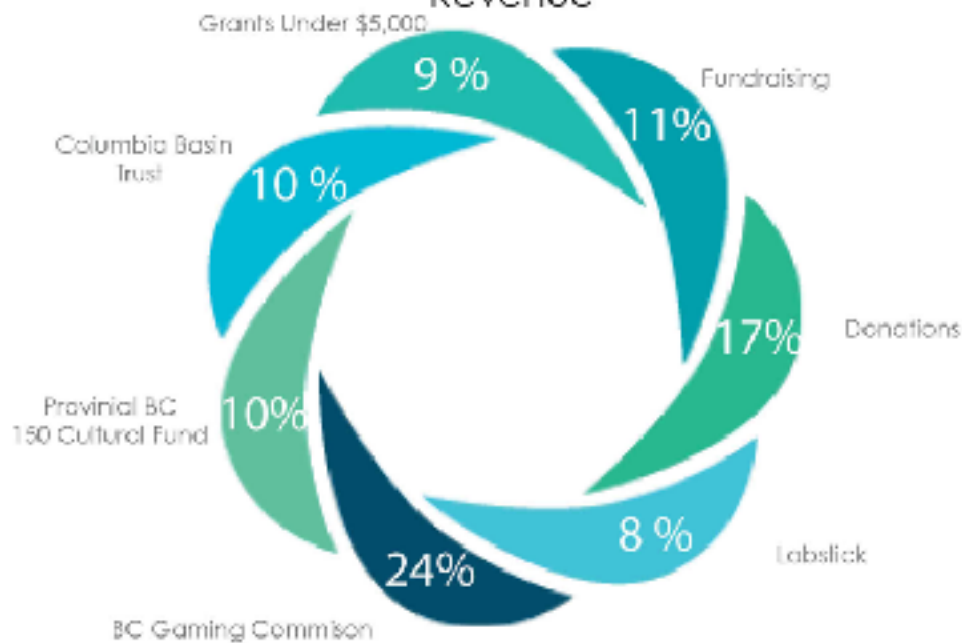


Open workstation: Upstairs at the Women's Centre is a quiet desk for women to work on a resume, check emails or do other tasks online. Thanks to the generous donation of a printer, users can use this computer to print forms, letters or resumes, to do online job searches or just to stay in touch with family and friends. Visitors can also access free wifi at the centre if they bring their own devices.

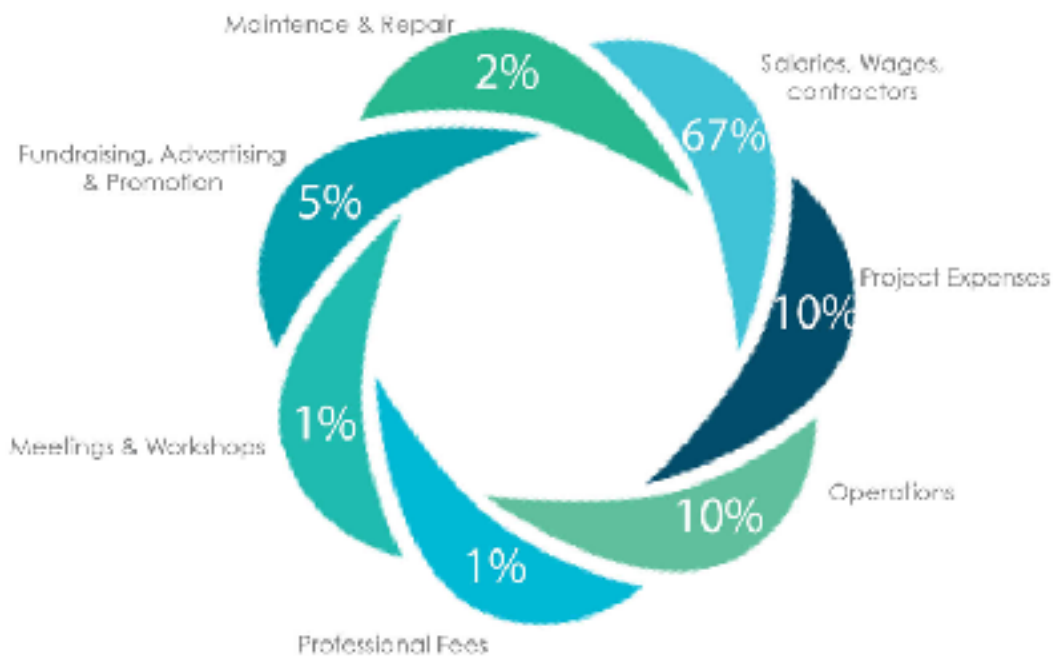
Library: The West Kootenay Women's Association (WKWA) Library is still part of the Nelson Women's Centre, and you can still check books out. The fiction section is downstairs, and the rest of our small collection is upstairs in the multipurpose room. We still have our Herstory, Feminist Analysis, Biographies, Family/Child Care, Youth and Lesbian sections and a bit of Violence, Native Studies, Peace, Sewing and handcrafts. Almost all books are authored by women. No one knows exactly when the WKWA Library began, but it was probably in the early 1980s when the Nelson Women's Centre was located in the old jam factory building. You can check out books for 3 weeks from the checkout date. Come and have a look! You'll find a comfy chair both upstairs and down.

Financials

Revenue



Expenses



This year our revenues were \$121,243. Our fiscal year expenses were \$126,900 leaving a deficit of \$5657. For more information, please see our financial statements which can be found on our website at www.nelsonwomenscentre.com

Upcoming Events

Womaginarium - Summer Women's Festival
August 25-27 2017
Harrop Hall, Harrop BC

Annual General Meeting – September 28th
Join us for our annual general meeting at 6:00 pm at the Seniors
Centre next to the Civic Theatre



Womaginarium – November 17th
At the Lakeside Prestige. Join us for a carnival of
wonders & curiosities

École Polytechnique Massacre Memorial
December 6th

Ted X Women movie nights
check website for dates

International Women's Day
&
Kootenay feminism exhibition at Touchstones gallery
Opening Reception March 8, 2018
Facebook page or at nelsonwomenscentre.com

Be part of the Women's Centre Ways to Get Involved

- Become a board member
- Become a part of our fundraising committee
- Volunteer in Drop-in or other programming and events
- Experience Rooted In Community Training
- Become a monthly donor

Thank You to Our Major Donors

Regional District of Central Kootenay
BC Gaming Commission
Columbia Basin Trust
Kootenay Co-op Country Store
Shoppers Drug Mart
Lobstick Foundation
Community Fund of North Kootenay Lake
Columbia Power
Nelson Lions Club
Nelson & District Credit Union
Osprey Foundation
Walmart Community Giving
Osprey Foundation

As well as to all the local businesses, service groups & individuals who have helped the Women's Centre continue to operate the Drop-in centre and to provide all the amazing opportunities for women to grow and thrive in our community.

A special thanks to the Nelson Food Cupboard, Kootenay Co-op, Silverking Tofu, Local Farmers, SEEDS, and Our Daily Bread for weekly food donations that allow us to provide a nourishing meal to women who attend the Drop-in and supplement their family food budget.

And to the over 60 volunteers who donated 925 volunteers hours to serve the community of women here. We could not run the Centre without your support.

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

Gandhi