



NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE  
EMPOWERING WOMEN BY PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT TO EXPLORE THEIR NEEDS

## feminist DISPATCH

The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre is a non-profit, community-based feminist organization in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

We work with self-identified women to increase their access to knowledge, skills and resources so they can make informed choices.

December 6, 1989 | Montreal Massacre

WE REMEMBER

NATIONAL DAY  
OF REMEMBRANCE  
AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN

Today we remember the 14 women killed in 1989 in the Montreal Massacre at L'Ecole Polytechnique, the many missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people, and all of the women and girls who have been taken by femicide to date. The list is far too long. They are all loved and deeply missed by their families, friends, and communities.

from **Rise Up! Feminist Archive:**

*On the evening of December 6, 1989, a man with a rifle entered a classroom in L'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, separated the women and men, then claimed he was "fighting feminism", called the women "a bunch of feminists" and shot nine women, killing six of them. He moved on through the college shooting more women. During his 20-minute rampage, he murdered 14 women and injured 10 other women and four men before taking his own life. His suicide note blamed feminists for ruining his life and included a list of 19 prominent Quebec feminists who he also planned to target.*

*What became known as The Montreal Massacre occurred as feminists were winning victories in the fight for control of their bodies and against violence. This included the Canadian Supreme Court's landmark decision in 1988 declaring that the Criminal Code provision making abortion criminal was unconstitutional, as it violated a woman's right to security of person under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There was also growing activism across the country demanding that gender-based harassment and violence in all its forms, including partner violence, sexual assault, and workplace harassment and violence, be recognized and stopped.*

In Thunder Bay, the Northern Women's Centre (now known as the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre) was holding its Annual General Meeting on the evening of December 6, 1989. The women in attendance would not find out about the Montreal Massacre until hearing about it on the radio afterwards. Learn more about the local response by feminists and the immediate backlash by anti-feminists, by reading Joan Baril's piece: "[The Centre of the Backlash.](#)"



**16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence** is a global campaign calling for an end to gender-based violence. It begins on November 25th, the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#), includes [The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women](#) on December 6th, and ends on December 10th: [Human Rights Day](#).

On September 25th, Thunder Bay City Council formally declared GBV and IPV an epidemic immediately following our deputation on behalf of both local anti-violence coordinating committees. In addition, City officials have invited us to present to the social services administration board and the Intergovernmental Affairs committee, and also supply a list of actionable goals for City Council to better support survivors of GBV in our community. Therefore, we will focus our 2023 16 Days campaign on these goals – efforts at the municipal and personal level that can address gender-based violence.

**Follow our 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign on our [website](#) and [facebook](#).**

View our 2022 campaign with clickable resource links: [16 Days Infographic](#)

## Emergency Food Plan



On November 27, 2023 the Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy (TBAFS), in partnership with the City of Thunder Bay and nine non-profit organizations that make up Thunder Bay's essential food access infrastructure (including the NOWC), officially ratified the first Emergency Food Plan for Thunder Bay. The Emergency Food Plan (EFP) has been developed to act as a public strategy to complement the City of Thunder Bay's overall Emergency Plan by addressing challenges related to food access and its associated impacts on health and wellbeing during medium and large-scale emergency events in the City of Thunder Bay, ON, with a particular focus on vulnerable populations.

Once activated, the plan brings together the Primary Partners table, a group of key food access actors in our community, who initiate a response structure based on the needs of the emergency. To support the implementation of the response, the EFP also relies on the support of the Food Access Coalition, a group of over 40 non-profit organizations with key physical, human, and

financial resources that can be mobilized to support a larger response.

The EFP is among the first of its kind in Canada and was born out of the local experiences of emergency food response during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through community-based research, network building, and deep collaboration, our community has imagined, funded, and executed an essential piece of resilience planning. With a living plan like the EFP, the journey has only just begun!

--Courtney Strutt, Emergency Food Plan Coordinator

*Photo Credit: Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy (not pictured: Gwen O'Reilly)*

## Thursday Drop-in Sessions

# Drop-In Sessions



↘

IN DECEMBER

↘

1-3PM

<b>THURS 7</b>	<b>LOCAL AUTHOR READING</b> Author Margaret Schweitzer will visit us to read from each of her two published books, <i>The Copper Kettle</i> , and <i>Unlocking the Blue Door: Opening Up to Grief</i> . Q&A with the author to follow. Bring along your knitting or sketchbook and join us for a cozy afternoon!
<b>THURS 14</b>	<b>FESTIVE FEMINISTS</b> Join us for our last drop-in of the year! We'll decorate a gingerbread house together, and genderbread cookies to take home!
<b>Dec 22 to Jan 2</b>	<b>HOLIDAY CLOSURE</b> The Women's Centre will be closed, but you can still find resources on our websites: <a href="http://www.nwowomenscentre.org">www.nwowomenscentre.org</a> and <a href="http://www.goodfoodboxtb.org">www.goodfoodboxtb.org</a>



**NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO  
WOMEN'S CENTRE**  
↘ 73 N. Cumberland St., Thunder Bay  
(corner of Cumberland & Tupper)

**Materials, some instruction, and light refreshments provided.**  
**Thursdays 1-3pm | Bus tickets available.**  
For more information, email Stacey at [communications@nwowc.org](mailto:communications@nwowc.org)  
or visit [nwowomenscentre.org/events](http://nwowomenscentre.org/events)

We're hosting **Thursday afternoon drop-ins from 1-3pm** for all self-identified women, Two-Spirit, trans and non-binary folks at the Women's Centre!

With funding from the Canadian Women's Foundation, we are excited to host these free sessions as informal opportunities to connect with other women, do some artmaking or crafting, and have coffee/tea and snacks. Sometimes we'll have a guest speaker or watch a short film or video, sometimes we'll just make things and chat. No registration is necessary. Materials and refreshments provided. Join us anytime between 1pm and 3pm, and stay for a bit or the full session.

*Remember: The Women's Centre is a non-judgmental and welcoming space where we are all teachers and learners. Absolutely no art, writing, knitting or group experience is required to come and hang out with us. Feel free to just come for a coffee!*

We would love to see you!

Need more info? Get in touch with Stacey at [communications@nwowc.org](mailto:communications@nwowc.org)

## Good Food Box

# 12 JARS of JOY!

Holiday Fundraiser for the Good Food Box Program



**\$95**  
(includes \$40 charitable donation receipt)

12 jars, 12 surprises! Perfect for Secret Santa, stocking stuffers, office games, or your favourite teachers. Or keep it for yourself and unwrap one a day to celebrate the 12 days of Christmas!

Each jar contains locally made or produced items, such as honey, jam, body butter, a candle, from some of our favourite local suppliers such as, **Bears' Bees, Tomlin, Nook, Three Trees, and many more!**

The jars are individually wrapped and tagged to acknowledge your support of the Good Food Box Program. **Order at [goodfoodboxtb.org](http://goodfoodboxtb.org)**

Pick up from  
**Moose Hall**  
**Dec 21st 3-5pm**

**Order here**



Proudly administered by the  
**NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE**  
ESTABLISHED 1982 BY WOMEN TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

  [@goodfoodboxtbay](https://www.instagram.com/goodfoodboxtbay)

 **GOOD FOOD BOX**

Place Your Order

## Community Events + Additional Resources

### December Commemorations + Dates of Significance:

- **International Day of Persons with Disabilities** - 3rd
- **International Day of the Volunteer** - 5th
- **National Day of Remembrance and Action on VAW** - 6th
- **Human Rights Day** - 10th

### EVENTS

- Dec. 8: **Sober Dance** at Oliver Rd. Rec Centre (70s, 80s, 90s music); scent-free, 8pm-midnight; \$7.50 each or \$10/two people. More info or e-transfer: [beautifulemma2012@gmail.com](mailto:beautifulemma2012@gmail.com)
- Dec. 7th & 14th | 6-8pm: **BYO Beads Beading Nights** at Thunder Bay Art Gallery. Each night led by a different pair of Indigenous artists.



- Dec. 13th | 12-3pm: [Walking with Our Relations](#) (ONWA)

#### OPPORTUNITY:

- [JEREMY DIAS SCHOLARSHIP](#) to recognize a youth who has taken initiative in addressing discrimination towards 2SLGBTQIA+ folks in their school or community (deadline Dec. 31).

#### RESOURCES:

- [P.A.C.E. Warming Centre](#) is now open every day: weekdays from 8am - 8:30pm and weekends from 9am - 8:30pm.
- [Changes coming for Ontario workers](#) regarding EI rates and job postings (CLEO)
- [Cyberbullying girls with pornographic deepfakes is a form of misogyny](#) (A.M. Narvali et al., *The Conversation*, November 28, 2023)
- [Gender-based violence: Teaching about its root causes is necessary to address it](#) (C. Vanner, *The Conversation*, November 26, 2023)
- [White Paper on the Status of Trans and Gender Diverse People](#) (June 2023) Randall Garrison, MP, Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke and Dylana Thompson

#### SHORT FILM:

- [Beyond December 6](#) (1991) directed by Catherine Fol (28 mins.)

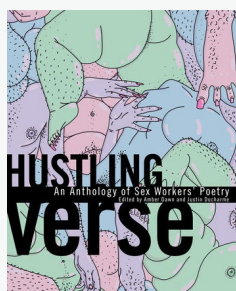


## Mutual Aid Opportunity

While we continue to advocate for changes to policies and practices that make women disproportionately vulnerable to violence and poverty, we know that access to some basic material items can still be helpful. We also recognize the importance of taking care of one another, and we know that many NOWC supporters might appreciate an opportunity to extend support to women in our community in other ways. Informed by our conversations with women who visit the Centre, these items would be especially helpful lately:

- [adult monthly bus pass](#)
- reusable water bottles
- new socks, underwear
- winter gloves or mitts
- grocery or Tim Hortons gift cards
- prepaid phone cards
- toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss
- menstrual pads (light or regular)
- Poise pads (for incontinence)

If you'd like to donate any of these items, please drop by the Women's Centre (M-Th between 9:30am and 5pm) or get in touch with Stacey at [communications@nwowc.org](mailto:communications@nwowc.org) to make alternate arrangements.



## Loud Women Book Club

The Loud Women Collective's monthly book club reads exclusively feminist non-fiction covering a wide range of topics, encouraging learning, personal growth, and allyship. Thunder Bay chapter typically meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month in store at Goods & Co Market. The book for December is [Hustling Verse: An Anthology of Sex Worker Poetry](#) edited by Amber Dawn & Justin Ducharme. Check out the LWC for availability.

## From the Feminist Archives

**Rise Up!** is a digital archive of feminist activism in Canada from the 1970s to the 1990s

- [Women Unite!: An Anthology of the Canadian Women's Movement](#)
- 45 years ago: [Lesbian Perspective – December/January 1978/79](#)
- 27 years ago: [Women's Rights Bulletin – December 1996](#)

## Gender-Based Violence: How we can help

**Our Gender-Based Violence Navigation Advocate provides support for women who are experiencing (or at risk of experiencing) physical and/or sexual violence or coercive control by a partner, family member or acquaintance. Women navigating various court systems may also access court advocacy.**

We can help by:

- Ensuring that women who are experiencing or at high risk of gender-based violence have access to ongoing and appropriate support and referrals
- Coordinating with Violence Against Women service providers to ensure that critical information is shared
- Assisting with preparing for court
- Ensuring coordination between legal sectors (criminal, family, immigration etc.)
- Providing court accompaniment and emotional support

This service is intended to enhance the effectiveness of the existing VAW response, not duplicate or replace it. For more information or to make a referral, contact Jennifer:

Email: [navigator@nwowc.org](mailto:navigator@nwowc.org) Phone: (807) 935-8042



### Computer Space Available

Women can access a computer or video conferencing in a private space at the Women's Centre for:

- Counselling or Healthcare Appointments
- Job Interviews
- Virtual Legal Clinic
- Lawyer's Appointments
- Virtual Court Matters

Email [navigator@nwowc.org](mailto:navigator@nwowc.org) to reserve the space.

## Contribute to the Feminist Dispatch!

Submit a photo of your original artwork, a short piece of writing, a helpful resource, or a link to a community event that aligns with our **mission**! All newsletter-related inquiries and submissions can be directed to Stacey at [communications@nwowc.org](mailto:communications@nwowc.org).

Want to check out past issues? They're archived on our website in PDF format (the links within the PDFs are active): <https://nwowomenscentre.org/newsletter/>



### ***Helping Women Find Their Way Since 1973!***

The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre relies on government funding and private donations to continue our work. We gratefully acknowledge the support of volunteers, donors, and the Investing in Women's Future Program of the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada, Canadian Women's Foundation, and the Johnson Scholarship Foundation.

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## **Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre**

73 Cumberland St. N., Thunder Bay, ON P7A 4L8

(807) 345-7802 | [ed@nwowc.org](mailto:ed@nwowc.org)

[www.nwowomenscentre.org](http://www.nwowomenscentre.org)



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