



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.



Image credit: NWAC facebook

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Today is the second annual **National Ribbon Skirt Day**.

Young student Isabella Kulak was shamed for proudly wearing a ribbon skirt during a formal elementary school event in Saskatchewan in 2021. Senator Mary Jane McCallum subsequently put forward a bill to recognize National Ribbon Skirt Day, and January 4, 2023 marked the first one.

Learn more:

- [Indigenous designers are bringing fresh perspectives to the ribbon skirt tradition](#) (CBC Indigenous, January 4, 2024)
- [National Ribbon Skirt Day bill passed, to be celebrated on Jan. 4](#) (CBC Indigenous, December 23, 2022)
- [National Ribbon Skirt Day Act](#) (Government of Canada, 2022)
- [The Power of One: Isabella Kulak](#) (*Kci-Niwesq*, NWAC, March 2021)
- [Understanding history, protocol important for allies who want to wear ribbon skirts: Advocates](#) (CBC Indigenous, January 4, 2023)

Remembering Fiona Karlstedt



Our feminist community is mourning the passing of Fiona Karlstedt (1949-2023). She was one of the brilliant and determined women profiled in our 2016 book,

40 Fabulous Feminists & Amazing Activists of Northwestern Ontario. Fiona was involved in numerous status of women initiatives as a volunteer or staff, including the NWO Women's Centre, NWO Women's Decade Council, NWO Regional Day Care Committee, Crisis Homes Inc. (Faye Peterson House), and the Lakehead Social Planning Council.

Here's an excerpt from the book, in Fiona's own words:

All things changed for me with Daniel's birth in 1969. As a lone parent making very little money, finding childcare I could afford during those first years was a nightmare. To this day, I can close my eyes and still hear him screaming as I dropped him off at the babysitter's and turned to catch the bus to work, "Don't leave me, don't leave me!" In the moment, the Personal became Political: "No revolution like your own." To all those remarkable women who were there for me along life's road, I want to thank you for always 'hearing the song in my heart, and for singing it to me when memory failed.' I will never shut up.



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**.

In case you missed it, our 2023 campaign focused on efforts at the municipal and personal level that can address gender-based violence.

View our full campaign with clickable links to resources here:
<https://nwowomenscentre.org/16-days-of-activism/>

SAVE THE DATE: January 24th 6-8:30pm

Why does my bladder leak and where did my libido go at Menopause?

Join us for this interactive and informative presentation from Denise Hollway, a pelvic health/women's health physiotherapist and sexuality counsellor/educator, about how women can live their lives without leaking, be confident in their ability to move, and be intimate with pleasure AND without pain. Learn more about Denise below.

My name is Denise Hollway and I am a pelvic health physiotherapist and have a certificate in pelvic health sexuality counselling and education.

I am also a partner and wife to my guy, a mom, a grandmother, a mom-in-law, a daughter, a sister, a colleague and a friend.

I love helping women live their lives without leaking and being confident in their ability to move and be intimate with pleasure AND without pain.

My story started when I injured my spine working as a physiotherapist and then within a year, I sustained a pelvic floor injury during the birth of my daughter 37 years ago. I was 25.

Since then I have been seeking solutions for the resulting back and hip pain, challenges with sexual intimacy, and now, solutions for the effects of ageing on these injuries. The solution that gave me the best results was pelvic floor physiotherapy. The results were so beneficial to me at age 56 that I became a pelvic physiotherapist the same year.

My philosophy for my approach to my patients is the result of my journey. Pelvic floor physiotherapy gave me an understanding of my body as I finally understood how the breath and the inner core were connected.

I stopped approaching strength training (and life) like I was 20 and started to move and train to allow my inner core, including the pelvic floor muscles, to do their job.

My goal is to have my patients learn to trust their body by feeling it and understanding what needs to get stronger and what needs to move or become more relaxed. Ultimately this results in a treatment approach that lets my patient enjoy her changing body, move without leaking and rediscover pleasure in life as she defines it.

Registration for this event will be required, however, we're still deciding on our venue. To help us gauge our readers/members' interest (so we know how much space might be needed), please hit the button below to email Stacey to express your interest in attending. Thank you and stay tuned for details!

Email Stacey



**GOOD
FOOD BOX**

Thanks to some funding from the TBDSSAB's Thunder Bay Homelessness Prevention Program, we are now able to add healthy, protein rich, legumes and grains to your Good Food Box! Each month we'll feature a new legume, seed, or grain as a bonus item (it does not come out of the money you paid for your GFB). This addition stems from the recognition that the cost of a healthy diet continues to increase, despite the fact that folks are not experiencing a concurrent increase in wages or social benefits. The newsletter accompanying your box includes cooking instructions and delicious recipes with the box contents in mind. Boxes remain \$22 each.

Six of our host-sites offer both in-person and online ordering options. Click on the Order online button below. Select your host-site from the drop-down menu, choose the number of boxes, place your order. Please note: you have to click on the shopping basket icon to complete your order!

ORDER your January GFB from your host site by January 9th
PICK UP from your host site on January 17th

Order online

Thursday Drop-in Sessions

Drop-In Sessions



IN JANUARY



1-3PM

**THURS
4**

SELF-DEFENCE STARTS WITH SELF

Join us for an inspiring conversation with Mary MacDonald as she shares empowering stories from her career as a Traditional Martial Artist and instructor, and her plans to offer self-defence instruction for women and girls.

**THURS
11**

GIVE A DARN WITH BETTY CARPICK

While learning basic practical stitches, we'll consider darning and mending holes or worn areas as acts of care. We'll begin with simple visible darning techniques and create a mini sampler in preparation for darning at home.

**THURS
18**

ADVOCACY 101

We'll learn how to write clear letters to relevant government representatives and policymakers, as well as how to make a deputation to City Council. If you're already an experienced advocate, come and share your strategies!

**THURS
25**

SOUP & STORIES & SWAP

Let's break bread and share stories of our most beloved dishes or treasured recipes. Bring your tried and true recipes to exchange with others. Hearty winter veggie soup provided!



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
or visit 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

Community Events + Additional Resources

EVENTS

- Jan. 20th | 1pm: Author Reading with Murillo-based writer [Margaret Schweitzer](#) at Mary J.L. Black Community Program Room. She will read from her new novel, *Miss Putnam's Garden*, a fictional story about how three women from three generations of the same family all survive abuse.
- Feb. 8th | Brodie Resource Library Indigenous Knowledge Centre Reading Room: [Author Reading with Tanya Talaga](#). Seating is limited; registration required. Contact Robyn Medicine for more information: (807) 684-6813.
- Feb. 8-10th | Thunder Bay Art Gallery: [Aanikoobijiganag: Thunder Bay Beading Symposium](#) (workshops may be full but some events appear open to the public)

RESOURCES:

- [P.A.C.E. Warming Centre](#) is now open every day: weekdays from 8am - 8:30pm and weekends from 9am - 8:30pm.
- [Grace Place](#) is open 1-4pm on Mon, Tues, Wed for a hot meal in a warm place.
- [Care Bus](#) is operating 7 days a week, 1-9pm. Contact 807-630-8631.
- [The Power of Giving: Michelle Derosier and Ma-Nee Chacaby, when friends become family](#) in *She is Wise* (December 2023, ONWA)
- [Changes coming for Ontario workers](#) regarding EI rates and job postings (CLEO)
- [SIU Investigating Death of Woman in Thunder Bay](#) (January 4, 2023)
- [Femicide, media bias, and telling the real stories of women behind the headlines](#) (S. Rent, *Halifax Examiner*, January 4, 2024) Note: scroll down to view article.
- [Gender-based violence: Teaching about its root causes is necessary to address it](#) (C. Vanner, *The Conversation*, November 26, 2023)
- [Moving On: Digital Empowerment and Literacy Skills for Survivors](#) (Knowledge Hub webinar recording and slides, October 25, 2023).
- [Palestine Digital Action Toolkit](#) (Palestinian Feminist Collective, October 2023)

PODCAST:

- [the trauma-informed lawyer](#) hosted by Myrna McCallum (S3:E12): [Healing Sexual Harm Through Restorative Justice: a Conversation with Marlee Liss](#)



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 to make alternate arrangements.

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**
- 52 years ago: *The New Feminist* – Vol. 3, Issue 1 – January 1972
- 49 years ago: *The Northern Woman* – Vol. 2, Issue 2 – 1975

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 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 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.

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.

Support Our Work

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