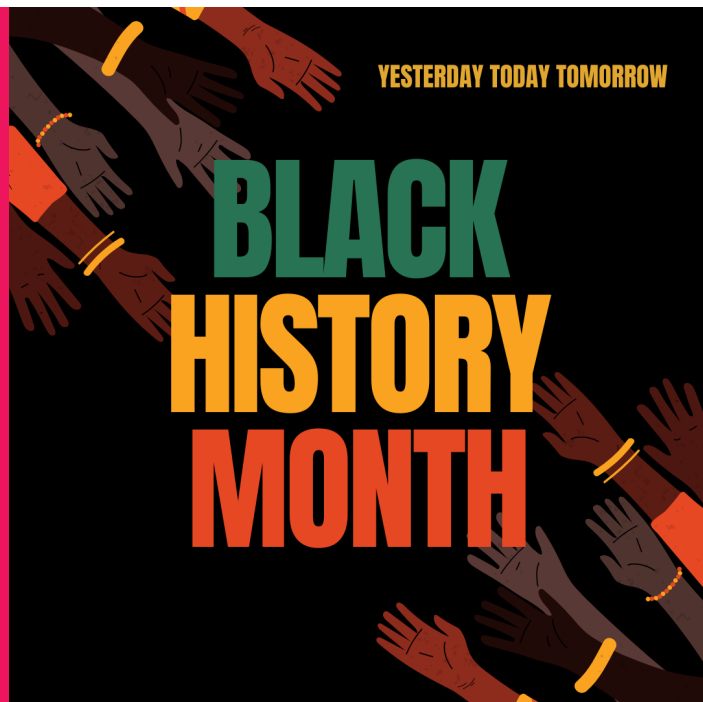




NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE
EMPOWERING WOMEN BY PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT TO EXPLORE THEIR NEEDS

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.



Hi everyone!

My name is Victoria Umar Idris, and I am an International Student from Nigeria studying Social Justice at Lakehead University. I am currently doing my practicum at the Women's Centre.

Working at the Centre has been a transformative experience. I am learning, relearning, and unlearning a lot of things.

A concept I have been learning a lot about is "advocacy."

I am learning that advocacy is treating the root cause of sickness, not the symptoms.

I am learning that advocacy is not a day's job. It takes time, effort, and collaboration.

I am learning that advocacy can take various forms. It is not limited to one thing.

I am learning that you cannot do advocacy alone; you need others, you need the community.

I am learning that advocacy is not being the voice of people but adding your voice to the voices of people and amplifying their voices.

I am learning that in advocacy, you don't always have to wait for the "important people" to make things happen. You work with the community to find ways to make things work.

I am learning the importance of self-care in advocacy. "Self-care is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, which is an act of political warfare" (Audre Lorde).

Advocacy is hard work. It takes patience, resilience, and bravery—these are things I see in the Women and Volunteers at the Women's Centre.

Black History Month

In Canada, we celebrate Black History Month in February because Jean Augustine, the first African Canadian woman elected to Parliament, made a motion in 1995 that passed unanimously.

At the Women's Centre, we are committed to accountable anti-racism, to listening and learning from people who are the experts of their own experiences, and to directing our privilege and power toward an equitable future.

February is also **Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month** and **Sexual Health Week** falls in February too. Did you know that the term **reproductive justice** (reproductive rights + social justice) was coined by a group of Black women in Chicago in 1994?

Herstory of Reproductive Justice by **SisterSong**:

Right before attending the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, where the entire world agreed that the individual right to plan your own family must be central to global development, a group of black women gathered in Chicago in June of 1994. They recognized that the women's rights movement, led by and representing middle class and wealthy white women, could not defend the needs of women of color and other marginalized women and trans* people. We needed to lead our own national movement to uplift the needs of the most marginalized women, families, and communities.

These women named themselves Women of African Descent for Reproductive Justice, and RJ was born. Rooted in the internationally-accepted human rights framework created by the United Nations, Reproductive Justice combines reproductive rights and social justice. The progenitors of RJ launched the movement by publishing a historic full-page statement with 800+ signatures in The Washington Post and Roll Call. Just three years later, in 1997, SisterSong was formed to create a national, multi-ethnic RJ movement.

See also: **Visioning New Futures for Reproductive Justice Declaration 2023**

As always, we aim to learn from stories, podcasts, and articles by Black feminists, activists, scholars, journalists, and artists. Join us in exploring and celebrating the invaluable critical perspectives and creative contributions of Black women and gender-diverse people--this month and every month!



Dinner Party!

RSVP at least two days in advance.

Dress in your best fancy/formal clothing or traditional African clothing!

Hosted by:

- Sisters for Canadian Black Community
- Regional Multicultural Youth Council (RMYC)
- Caribbean and African Multicultural Association of Thunder Bay (CAMAT)
- Nigerian Community of Thunder Bay

Legal Information Session



ONLINE LEGAL INFORMATION SESSION

PARENTING PLANS: STRATEGIES & TIPS FOR WOMEN SURVIVING VIOLENCE

February 29 | 1:00-3:00pm

ON ZOOM

WITH

KRISTY HANSEN

LAWYER, HENDERSON FAMILY LAW

Join us for a presentation about creating a sustainable parenting plan with Kristy Hansen, a local lawyer practicing in the areas of Family Law and Child Protection.

Learning objectives:

- understanding the differences between parenting plans, separation agreements, and court orders
- gaining tips and strategies for navigating shared custody
- knowing when and where to get legal advice

This session will take place online via Zoom. However, if you are a woman or gender-diverse person without access to technology or privacy and/or you would prefer to attend this session in person at the Women's Centre, please contact Stacey at communications@nwowc.org.

Register

SAVE THE DATE: IWD

Flag Raising for International Women's Day

Join us at **City Hall on Wednesday, March 6th** to raise the flag!

Opening remarks at 10am. Flag will be raised around 10:30am.

Please feel welcome to stay for light refreshments following the flag raising.

On March 8th, Dame Más Dance is hosting Fiesta de Mujeres, a dance party and fundraiser in support of the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre! It's \$10 at the door and there's a beginner dance lesson before the party really starts!

A vibrant purple poster for 'Fiesta de Mujeres'. The background is a deep purple with white musical notes and silhouettes of people dancing. At the top left is a 'Prizes!' icon. At the top center is the 'Dame Más Dance' logo. At the top right is a '\$10' price tag. The main title 'FIESTA de Mujeres' is in large, stylized white letters. Below it, a central box contains the text 'A Celebration of International Women's Day For Everyone' with silhouettes of a man and a woman. To the left of the box, the text 'Salsa Bachata Merengue' is written. To the right, 'Kizomba Afrobeats Reggaeton' is written. At the bottom, the 'Norteleños Taqueria' logo is shown, along with the address '698 Arthur St. W., Thunder Bay, ON'. The date 'March 8, 2024' is prominently displayed in large white letters. Below the date, the event schedule is listed: '9:00 PM | BEGINNER LATIN DANCE LESSON' and '10:00 PM - 1:00 AM | SOCIAL DANCE WITH DJ EDDIE'.

In support of :

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



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 February GFB from your host site by February 12th
PICK UP from your host site on February 23rd

[Order online](#)



LOCAL VEGGIES AT COST!

Featuring contents from Sleepy G Farm, Root Cellar Gardens, Pitch Creek Farm, Belluz Farms, and P0Ts2G0!

Choose the box option that best fits your situation:

- **\$25** for \$25 worth of local veggies
- **\$30** for \$25 worth of local veggies + \$5 donation to the GFB program
- **\$65** for \$25 worth of local veggies + ceramic planter by local potter + packet of purple frilly poppy seeds + \$20 donation to the GFB (charitable donation receipt provided)

Limited quantities available.

Order online with a credit card or Paypal. Prefer to pay cash or use interac? Orders are also accepted in person at the [Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre](#).

Pick up from the Moose Hall on WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21st from 3-5pm.

[Order now](#)

Thursday Drop-in Sessions

Drop-In Sessions



IN FEBRUARY



1-3PM

**THURS
1**

KNITTING + CROCHET

Back by popular demand! Make a hat for a community member or bring your own project to work on.

**THURS
8**

STITCHING HEARTS

Sew together a small stuffed heart for yourself or loved one. Gift it to someone you know or a random stranger with a little note of appreciation.

**THURS
15**

DIAMOND ART

Drawing from from cross-stitch and paint-by-numbers, this is a relaxing activity of applying rhinestones to a self-adhesive canvas print to create a full 'painting.'

**THURS
22**

WRITING WITH JOAN BARIL

Joan Baril, feminist writer and activist, will read her short memoir piece about the Abortion Caravan, and guide us through some fun writing activities!

**THURS
29**

LEGAL INFO SESSION

Join us for a presentation about creating a sustainable parenting plan with Family Law Lawyer, Kristy Hansen. Learn some strategies and when to seek legal advice.



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 women, Two-Spirit, 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 experience needed to participate.

We would love to see you!

Need more info? Get in touch with Stacey at communications@nwowc.org



Clay Collective of NWO

Big thanks to the **Clay Collective** for choosing us to receive the proceeds from their annual Ornament Fundraiser!

They delivered a cheque for \$521.01!

We're grateful for their support.

Community Events + Additional Resources



17th Annual VALENTINE'S Day Memorial Walk

RESCHEDULED
NEW DATE ANNOUNCED

*Schedule
Change*

→ **FEBRUARY 13TH at 6:00 p.m.**

THIS YEAR THINGS HAVE CHANGED!

Please **GATHER** at 6:00 p.m.
at the former St. Peter's
church parking lot, just over
the East End bridge. We will
be walking approximately
650 meters from Connolly
Street to the Neebing
McIntyre Floodway to join
the drumming ceremony.
Please dress appropriately.
Scan here for map details:



February 13, 2024 will mark the tragic anniversary
of the death of Sandra Johnson who was only 18
years old at the time that her body was discovered
on the frozen surface of the Neebing-McIntyre
Floodway in the East End in Thunder Bay.

*In memory of
Sandra Kaye
Johnson*

Please share widely,
all are welcome



Bring your drum, rattle and/or a candle and join
us in honoring Sandra. A limited supply of
rattles and candles will be available



Neebing McIntyre Floodway
Tuesday, February 13th
7pm



EVENTS

- Feb. 8th, 2:30-5:30pm | **Free Legal Advice Clinic on Tenant's Rights** from the Community Legal Clinic. They will look over your lease and give you legal advice during this session at The Study, Lakehead University.
- Feb. 8th at 6pm | Brodie Resource Library Indigenous Knowledge Centre Reading Room: **Author Reading with Tanya Talaga**. Seating is limited; registration required.
- Feb. 8-10th | Thunder Bay Art Gallery: **Aanikoobijiganag: Thunder Bay Beading Symposium** (workshops may be full but some events appear open to the public)
- Feb. 12-16 is **Sexual Health Week**, Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights' signature public health campaign. *It's connected to more than just pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections – sexual health includes things like how we feel*

about our bodies, consent, social relationships, pleasure, who we're attracted to, and more!

- Feb. 17th at 1pm EST | "[Decolonizing Reproductive Justice – Indigenous Voices](#)," an all-Indigenous panel talking about the colonial history of abortion and reproductive health care in Canada, and the need for reproductive health and justice for Indigenous people of all genders.
- Feb. 22nd from 1-2:30pm EST | [Migration, race, child welfare and the right to citizenship](#). A virtual panel hosted by OCASI.
- [Tomorrow Without Violence](#) (Thunder Bay Counselling): 1-day in-person group sessions to help help you and your children learn about the impacts of intimate partner violence, and provide a safe space to talk about it. Contact Janna for more info and to register: 807-683-4710.

RESOURCES + ACTIONS:

- [Where to Get Food in Thunder Bay: A List of Programs and Services](#) (updated)
- Ontario Disability Justice Network released a [new toolkit](#) to empower youth (12-17) navigating the criminal legal system - with or without a lawyer - who are also racialized, living with a disability, or who are autistic or neurodivergent.
- [Gender-Based Violence in Schools and the Intersectional Experiences of Black-Canadian Girls](#) (webinar recording, presentation slides, and resources from March 2023)
- [A Black Woman's Res\(t\)istance](#) (Amari Gaiter, *Autostraddle*, Sept. 2021)
- [I made a documentary about the Black maternal health crisis. Then I experienced it](#) (Amanda Parris, *CBC Docs*, Feb 1, 2024)
- [Girls in hijab experience overlapping forms of racial and gendered violence](#) (Almansori & Saleh, *The Conversation*, Feb. 1, 2024)
- [In high-profile sexual assault trials, rape myths and the social status of the defendants can affect jurors' perceptions](#) (Pozzulo, *The Conversation*, Feb. 1, 2024)
- Simulations with actors prepare journalism students to interview trauma survivors (M. Pearson, *The Conversation*, January 22, 2024)
- Action Canada's [Canadian Contraception Map](#), a geographic representation of their comparative analysis of provincial and territorial contraception policies.
- [Global Action to End Gender Apartheid in Iran and Afghanistan](#)
- [Palestinian Feminist Collective](#) (analyses, toolkit, resources)

PODCAST:

- [Hoodrat to Headwrap: A Decolonized Podcast](#) with Ericka Hart and Ebony Donnley



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](#)

From Rise Up!:

Our research into [Black women's activism](#) includes highlighting anti-racist activism in different locales as outlined in [the Congress of Black Women of Canada Toronto Chapter Summary of Organizing, 1989 to 1993](#). We address the concerns about racism that were raised with respect to [Nellie's Place](#), one of the earliest women's shelters to open (in Toronto) in 1973. Here, our evidence comes from our interviews with Carolann Wright and other racialized feminist activists. This action is widely acknowledged amongst racialized women activists as a turning point when women of colour publicly named their experiences of racism in the larger women's movement. We also highlight the role of the Black church in Nova Scotia as demonstrated in the documentary [Black Mother, Black Daughter](#) by Sylvia Hamilton and Claire Prieto.

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

[AAGBV](#) [Advocacy](#) [Good Food Box](#) [Public Education](#) [What's New](#)



Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre

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

(807) 345-7802 | ed@nwowc.org

www.nwowomenscentre.org



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