



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.

Here in **Ontario**, May is Sexual Violence Prevention Month. In other locations, the month may instead be referred to as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). **Draw the Line** (OCRCC)'s use of language offers a helpful distinction:

*In 2022, the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC) discussed how since #MeToo, the drive for awareness was successful. Disclosures that were shared began to lift the shame and stigma attached to conversations around sexual violence. With this culture shift, the OCRCC chose to shift from awareness to prevention. The choice of wording, in using 'violence' as opposed to 'assault,' was also intentional, in an effort to move away from a legal term and shift emphasis to the experience and impact of sexual violence.*

Back in March, the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre hosted the annual Flag Raising Ceremony for **International Women's Day**; here a crowd of activist, allies, and community members came together to hear the words of our guest speaker, Karen Slomke. Karen is a registered Social Worker who has worked in the community of Thunder Bay for the past 30 years. Her speech drew from her own understanding of how trauma informs and impacts our community on an individual and collective basis in this time of technology, with an emphasis on the local event in March 2025 where

citizens of Thunder Bay were charged with exploiting other citizens through the sharing of intimate, stolen images of local women.

[Read the full IWD speech here](#)

Draw the Line is an interactive campaign by the [OCRCC](#) engaging Ontarians in dialogue about sexual violence. Draw the Line keeps the conversation going by:

- sharing [free bystander intervention support resources](#) (including youth-focused, 2SLGBTQ+ and Indigenous perspectives)
- collaborating with Ontario sexual assault centres and [partner organizations](#)

Test your knowledge on consent and bystander intervention by taking the [Draw the Line Quiz](#)

**Here are resources to organizations supporting and empowering survivors:**

- [Survivors 4 Justice Reform](#): a non-profit organization with a collective focus on survivor-led advocacy & voluntary membership with occasional compensated opportunities supported by grants, partnerships & donations.
- [Ending Sexual Violence Association of Canada](#): a national non-profit that provides a unified voice on sexual violence through research, education, advocacy, and policy change, promoting solutions to address its root causes.
- [Aftermetoo](#): dedicated to ending sexual violence in the workplace
- Get access to a [Restorative Justice International Resource Guide](#), which includes global organizations, podcasts, books, documentaries and more
- Video: [Consent on Stolen Land](#) (Learning Network Forum, 2022)
- [Sex Only with Consent!](#) (2021): infographic about what consent is and when consent cannot be given
- [The Facts About Sexual Assault and Harassment](#) (Canadian Women's Foundation)

[Find support for survivors of sexual violence in Thunder Bay](#)

## Red Dress Day is on May 5th

[Red Dress Day](#), held every May 5th, is a National Day of remembrance and activism honouring the lives of [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirited People \(MMIWG2S+\)](#).

Red Dress Day matters because it makes the invisible visible. It forces this country to confront the truth. It reminds us that every single life matters, that these lives still matter, and we will never stop fighting for justice.



## **Sexual Violence Program: Supporting Survivors**



## Sexual Violence Program

Our Sexual Violence Program supports self-identified women aged 16+ who have experienced any form of sexual violence in person or online: sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual harassment, non-consensual distribution of intimate images, stalking or sex trafficking.

We aim to provide survivors with:

- a space to be heard, believed, and supported
- legal and systems advocacy, when appropriate
- free supportive counselling and other resources to rebuild their lives from the negative impacts of sexual violence

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

SVP supports available at no cost:

- 24/7 crisis line: (807) 345-0450
- 10-week support groups
- Accompaniments (hospital, police, court), where appropriate
- Advocacy
- Referrals
- Public education
- 20-week individual counselling offered at two locations:
  - Faye Peterson House (807) 345-0450
  - Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre (807) 620-9156

Our SVP is designed to serve the diverse experiences of members of our communities, including, but not limited to, Indigenous/Metis/Inuit, 2-Spirited, non-binary, LGBTQ, Black/racialized, disabled, sex workers, and sex trafficking survivors.



For more details about all of our programs and services, please visit:

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



In partnership with:  
Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre

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



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To help meet the needs of survivors since the Thunder Bay Sexual Abuse Centre closed, Faye Peterson House has developed a Sexual Violence Program. There are three Sexual Violence Counsellors offering a 20-week individual counselling program. Two counsellors are based at the shelter, and one is based here at the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre where there is now a private counselling room for this purpose.

If you're interested in counselling at the Women's Centre location or the Support Group meetings, you can reach Stacey Hare Hodgins (BA, HBSW, MA, RSW) directly at (807) 620-9156 or [sharehodgins@fayepeterson.org](mailto:sharehodgins@fayepeterson.org).

To access counselling for any kind of sexual violence (recent or past), you can call Faye Peterson House's 24/7 Crisis Line: (807) 345-0450. You do not need to reside at the shelter to access support from Faye Peterson House.

**Events & Programming updates from NWOC**



**BIG NEWS:  
We are moving!**



The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre will be moving locations in the near future. Please watch our [website](#) and [social media](#) for ongoing updates, we will keep you all notified of the upcoming changes. Thank you!

## Post Election Accountability

Elections are a time to tell political leaders and the candidates who are asking for our support, what matters, what we care about, and what kind of country we want to live in. Intimate partner violence is widely understood to be an epidemic in Canada. It represents a very real threat to our collective safety, and must be addressed as the public health emergency that it is.

Earlier in April, a coalition of advocates, activists, and frontline agencies in the fight to end gender-based violence wrote to each of the federal party leaders. An op ed was published the day before the election, outlining how each party responded to these letters. We share this as a form of accountability, to hold each party to the words they gave before the ballots were cast.

[Read the full op ed, "Vote to end Gender Based Violence" on the NOWC blog](#)



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# CALL FOR BOARD MEMBERS



## **NOWC Board: CALL FOR MEMBERS**

**Our small but mighty feminist non-profit is seeking self-identified women to sit on our volunteer Board of Directors, the strategic heart of our organization:**

- We encourage applications from women who have been subjected to intersecting oppressions or who see their lived experiences/realities reflected in our advocacy work
- Fundraising, special events planning, finance, legal, or human resources experience an asset
- No previous Board experience necessary

To request an information package or any additional questions, please contact Lori at [admin@nowoc.org](mailto:admin@nowoc.org) or by phone at 807-935-8043

See full post on the NOWC website



## **Craftivism at the Women's Centre**

### **DE-STASH OUR CRAFT SUPPLIES: Crafting Afternoon!**

Join us on Thursday, May 29th from 1-4pm at the NOWC. Help these crafting supplies find a new purpose in your own artwork or community project! Join us for the afternoon to make something

new, or “shop” through our current supplies and take something home with you :D



Watch our [NOWC blog](#) and social media for update, or contact [admin@nowoc.org](mailto:admin@nowoc.org) to get added to our Craftivism email list!

## Spring Beauty Fundraiser - May 3rd

You are invited to the Spring Beauty Mingle on **May 3<sup>rd</sup>** at the **Shoppers Drug Mart in Thunder Bay (on the corner of Arthur St and Vickers St)**. 100% of donations raised at this location support the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre. This fundraiser is hosted by the Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health.



**YOU'RE INVITED TO**  
*a beauty event with Shoppers Drug Mart*

# SPRING BEAUTY MINGLE

*Get your tickets today for May 3rd!*



**100% of donations support the**  
**NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE**  
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Treat yourself (or Mom!) to a beautiful make-over and skin care consultation, plus discover gifting ideas and fun finds for Mother's Day! Tickets for the day of the event are \$10; if you purchase a ticket before May 2nd, your name will go in for a big Basket draw! (last image). Other prizes include a mini lip gloss or sample bag with ticket purchase; there are also 6 additional baskets you can purchase tickets for a chance to win (tickets will be sold \$3 each of 3 for \$5)

### Upcoming Fundraiser with Lovely Body Products

We have an upcoming FUNDRAISER with Sarah from Lovely Body Products, starting **May 17th until mid June!**

MORE DETAILS TO COME! We will give an update on our [NOWC blog](#) and our social media soon!







# GOOD FOOD BOX

## May Orders

Order your GFB from your host site by **May 12th**  
PICK UP from your host site on **May 21st**

[Order online today!](#)

### The LEEKS IN THE BOAT will be making their return to the Lake in June!

The Good Food Box Program will be participating in the 3rd annual **United Way Great Lighthouse Rescue** in June!

Stay tuned for updates on our [website](#) and our [social media!](#)



## 2025 LOCALLY GROWN GOOD FOOD FUNDRAISER BOXES



**Annual fundraiser in support of the Thunder Bay Good Food Box program**

Local Fundraiser Boxes are \$60 each  
Price includes any applicable taxes as well as a \$20 donation to Thunder Bay Good Food Box.  
Charitable receipts issued.

Our **LOCALLY GROWN BOXES** are packed with a sampling of the best & freshest locally grown & produced goods from a number of local farms and producers, including: Morning Moon Farm, Root Cellar Gardens, Veg-e-tate Garden Market, Sleepy G Farms, Pitch Creek Farm, Bears' Bees & Honey, Brule Creek Farms, Thunder Oak Cheese Farm, Vanderwees Greenhouses, B&B Farms, Belluz Farms, and more.

Boxes available July through December  
Pick up Dates - 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month:  
July 16<sup>th</sup> | August 20<sup>th</sup> | September 17<sup>th</sup> |  
October 15<sup>th</sup> | November 19<sup>th</sup> | December 17<sup>th</sup>

**LIMITED QUANTITIES AVAILABLE**  
Order online at [www.goodfoodtb.org](http://www.goodfoodtb.org)  
in our 'Fundraiser' tab  
For more information, email [gfb@mwowc.org](mailto:gfb@mwowc.org)

It's that time of the year again! **The Locally Grown Good Food Fundraiser Boxes** are returning!

Local fundraiser boxes are available monthly from July to December and are \$62 each (this new pricing includes a \$2 online processing fee). Included in the cost of the Locally Grown Fundraising Box is a \$20.00 donation.

Our Locally Grown Boxes are packed with a sampling of the best & freshest locally grown & produced goods from a number of local farms and producers.

Our July Boxes are available starting June 17<sup>th</sup>

[Learn more about our fundraisers!](#)

# Community Events & Resources

**MAY IS Asian Heritage Month!**

**MAY 5TH | Red Dress Day**

**MAY 5TH - 11TH | Mental Health Week & National Elizabeth Fry Week**

**MAY 17TH | International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia**

## EVENTS

- **May 5th | “Eat your Backyard” 6pm – 7:30pm at Mary J Black Public Library:** join speakers from Superior Seed Producers for an evening of garden-related discussion. This month will focus on planning for seed saving: the easiest seeds to save as a beginner seed-saver, and the steps to take to ensure a successful first year of seed-saving. No registration required!
- **May 8th |** Join the **Elizabeth Fry Society** in ceremony in naming our house in honor of Amy Manning. All event will be held from 12-4pm at the newest transition house, there will be a community feast and a drumming ceremony. Donations are accepted to support housing as a human right initiative for EFRY week!
- **May 12th |** The **Western Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children** is hosting a webinar in collaboration with the FREDa Centre entitled, "Hearing Women's Voices: AB v Henry". This presentation is taking place on **11am – 12:30pm PST/ 2:00pm – 3:30pm EST**. For more information about the speakers and the register, follow the link [here](#)
- **May 14th, 21st, & 28th |** Join the **Black Legal Action Centre**, the **Human Rights Legal Support Centre**, and **CLEO** for a special 3-part webinar series. This series will focus on tips, techniques, and considerations for filing an application with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, the mediation process, and preparing for a hearing. Check out registration details [here](#)

## RESOURCES

- **Where to Get Food in Thunder Bay: A List of Programs and Services** (updated)
- **Independent Living Resource Centre** (ILRC) has launched a Community Lending Library of free rentals of air-purifying equipment to help make public events safer and more accessible. See their [full poster](#) for details!
- **“You are a Flower”:** a Comic created by **Vincy Lim** in collaboration with the **Learning Network**. It explores themes of self-expression, healing, and resilience through a unique art style inspired by zine culture. The comic invites readers to reflect on their own experiences and find strength in sharing their stories. Read more [here](#)
- Roxane Gay revisits her feminist essay, "Bad Feminist" a decade later in a new work, **Towards a New “Bad” Feminist Canon: Why Feminism Remains Essential**

## Gender Based Violence: 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 at [navigator@nwowc.org](mailto:navigator@nwowc.org) or by phone (807) 935-8042.

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## Mutual Aid Opportunity

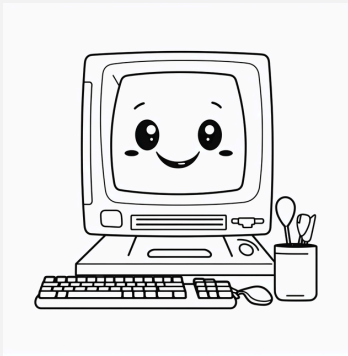


While we continue to advocate for changes to policies and practices that make women disproportionately vulnerable to violence and poverty, we know that access to some basic material items can still be helpful. We also recognize the importance of taking care of one another, and we know that many NOWC 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:

- Bus tickets, such as a **10 Ride Multipass**
- new socks
- Fresh Co. or Tim Hortons gift cards
- mini first aid kits (or packs of Band-Aids)
- toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, lip balm
- 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 Steph to make alternate arrangements: [communications@nwowc.org](mailto:communications@nwowc.org).

## Computer Resources Available



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

- Printing forms
- Job Interviews
- Virtual Legal Clinic
- Lawyer's Appointments
- Virtual Court Matters

To book an appointment, please contact Jennifer at 935-8042 or [navigator@nwowc.org](mailto:navigator@nwowc.org)

## 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 [communications@nwowc.org](mailto:communications@nwowc.org).

### *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

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



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