



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.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026

IWDA INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY

**WHEN MOVEMENTS RISE
MOUNTAINS MOVE**

New faces, new adventures: updates from the NOWC

We are happy to introduce two new staff at the NOWC: Katie Bortolin is our incoming Executive Director and Caro Whipp is our new GBV Navigator.

After 35 years as our stalwart Coordinator & Executive Director at the Women's Centre, Gwen O'Reilly will be retiring at the end of March. While she will be dearly missed day-to-day in the office, we wish her the best in her retirement! We invite you to join us in celebrating Gwen's lasting impact on our community at an upcoming retirement drop-in event (more details in "[Upcoming Events](#)"), as well as at our upcoming **International Women's Day Flag Raising on March 5th.**

As part of her reflection on all her years of service to the community, Gwen wrote a parting poem to share:

*The door of the Women's Centre opens.
A woman walks in. She is tall, short, old, young, white Brown
Black, queer, Trans
New to this country; her people have been here for millennia.
She is well dressed, disheveled, dykey, educated, broke,
trafficked, wealthy
And struggling.
She is nervous, composed, angry, triggered, overwhelmed,
determined, disassociated.
She has a problem or two.
Tears will inevitably follow, as will courage.
She needs to protect herself; her children; her career; her dignity;
her human rights.
She has told everyone she can imagine should listen.
They tell her it's her problem.
So, she came here. Even though she
Doesn't really know what we do.
Because we don't really do anything.
Except believe her,
And that changes everything.*

- Gwen O'Reilly, *A Parting Poem*

Read more of Gwen's reflections and thoughts on her time at the Women's Centre on our [NOWC Blog](#)

March 8th is International Women's Day!

March 8th is International Women's Day (IWD). It's a global day to recognize and celebrate women's and girls' social, economic, cultural, and political achievements. It's also a time to highlight the progress made in advancing women's rights and the ongoing efforts needed to ensure their full participation in all aspects of society.

Wondering what can you do to celebrate March 8th? Some possibilities:

- Make time for rest, resistance, dancing, joy and solidarity
- Join the NOWC at City Hall for the [annual IWD Flag Raising](#) (poster below)
- Learn about [the history of International Women's Day](#)
- Thank an advocate for their essential and meaningful work
- Learn about some of the [Women of Impact in Canada](#)
- Learn from and support BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ feminist writers, artists, makers
- Check out the [City of Thunder Bay Women's History Month online exhibit](#) to learn more about contributions and accomplishments by local women - including your very own Women's Centre
- Explore [RiseUp!](#): a digital archive of feminist activism (including digitized issues of the Northern Woman Journal)
- Tell stories with another woman, non-binary or Two-Spirit person, the kids, and the elders in your life
- Reflect on and celebrate collective opportunities and actions
- Seek out and amplify the voices and stories we rarely get to hear
- Actively support your local women's and equity-seeking organizations (e.g: [Beendigen](#), [Centr'Elles](#), [Elizabeth Fry Society NWO](#), [Faye Peterson House](#), [ONWA](#), [Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre](#))
- Keep reading our monthly [Feminist Dispatch](#) e-newsletter to find new perspectives and resources!



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



March 8



Canada

 International Women's Day

RAISE THE FLAG

**March 5th
10AM @ CITY HALL**

**ANNUAL FLAG RAISING FOR
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

GUEST SPEAKER: GWEN O'REILLY & KATIE BORTOLIN

PROCLAMATION READING, COFFEE & CUPCAKES



NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE
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Join us for the IWD Flag Raising on March 5th!

Join us at City Hall on **Thursday, March 5th** to raise the flag! We are happy to be joined by our guest speakers, Gwen O'Reilly and Katie Bortolin. Opening remarks at 10am, with the flag will be raised around 10:30am. Please feel welcome to stay for light refreshments following the flag raising. Please feel welcome to stay for light refreshments following the flag raising.

Read about last year's event on our [NOWC blog!](#)

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

TAPESTRY
INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S NETWORK
THUNDER BAY

WORK, WORTH, AND VOICE
STRENGTHENING EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

KNOW YOUR VALUE, BUILD CONFIDENCE
LEARN SALARY NEGOTIATION THROUGH REAL EXPERIENCE
GAIN CAREER TIPS AND CONNECT WITH PROFESSIONALS
REFRESHMENTS AND DOOR PRIZES!

MARCH 8, 2-4 PM
@ THUNDER BAY ART GALLERY
FREE ADMISSION!

LINKS TO EVENTBRITE:
<https://www.eventbrite.ie/ie/1981661873007?AFF=ODDtdtcreator>
ANY OTHER INQUIRIES:
NAHID ANEE
tapestrythunderbay@gmail.com

SAVE YOUR SPOT

tbaytel

IWD event with Tapestry

Join the **Thunder Bay Multicultural Association** on **March 8th 2-4pm** at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery for an inspiring afternoon focused on work, worth, and voice strengthening employment pathways for women in our community.

Free admission, refreshments & door prizes included! Save your spot today!

Save your spot!

Lakehead International celebrates IWD

Join Lakehead International on campus on **March 6th** to celebrate International Women's Day! **12 - 2pm at the Dining Hall**

MAKE IT. SHARE IT. OWN IT. Stop by to create a custom button that celebrates strength, resilience, and empowerment or leave a note of appreciation to recognize an inspiring woman in your life.

LAKEHEAD INTERNATIONAL IS
CELEBRATING

International Women's Day!

REMEMBER TO FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM@LAKEHEADINTLIFE_OR

WHEN: 06 MARCH 2026
WHERE: DINING HALL
TIME: 12 PM - 2 PM

MAKE IT. SHARE IT. OWN IT.

CREATE A CUSTOM BUTTON
THAT CELEBRATES
STRENGTH, RESILIENCE,
AND EMPOWERMENT

LEAVE A NOTE OF
APPRECIATION TO
RECOGNIZE AN INSPIRING
WOMAN IN YOUR LIFE

@simcoecounty
#ITSTARTS
SIMCOE

Lakehead UNIVERSITY International

Events & Programming updates from NOWC



At the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre, we believe survivors of sexual violence.

We are partnering with Faye Peterson House to offer a 6-part sexual violence education series. Sessions are open to self-identified women and girls (ages 18+) and will take place once a month from 6:30-8 pm at the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre (278 Bay St, Suite #201).

Join us on **Wednesday, March 4th** for our final monthly sexual violence education session: Trauma in the Body, where we will explore mindful movement to foster acceptance and growth. We are excited to have guest facilitator Michelle Derosier, yoga instructor and owner of **Manifesting Movement**.

Attendance at all sessions is not required. Bus tickets and light refreshments provided. To register, please contact Gwen at ed@nwowc.org

WE BELIEVE SURVIVORS

Sexual Violence Education Group
for Self-Identified Women

**March 4, 2026 -
Trauma in your Body**

Exploring mindful movement to foster acceptance and growth

🕒 **6:30 - 8pm** 📍 **Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre
278 Bay Street, Suite #201**

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE
NORTHWESTERN SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL LINGUISTIC ASSISTANCE TO ENGLISH SPEAKERS

FAYE
PETERSON HOUSE

With guest facilitator:

**Michelle Derosier,
yoga instructor and owner of
Manifesting Movement**

Attendance at all sessions is not required.
Bus tickets and light refreshments provided. To register, please
contact Gwen O'Reilly - ed@nwowc.org / 807-345-7802

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE
NORTHWESTERN SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL LINGUISTIC ASSISTANCE TO ENGLISH SPEAKERS

FAYE
PETERSON HOUSE

Join us for an afternoon of celebrating!

Join us for a drop-in event on **Thursday, March 26th** at the NOWC offices from 12-4pm to celebrate Gwen's retirement. Please bring memories, well-wishes for Gwen to help celebrate this auspicious occasion! Write her a poem (she likes limericks), create something small and artistic, or just a simple bon voyage! For additional info, please contact Lori at admin@nwowc.org



YOU ARE INVITED TO

*Gwen's
Retirement Pop-in*

Celebrating a career well spent and a
future well deserved

MARCH

THURSDAY

26

12-4PM

Northwestern Ontario
Women's Centre Inc.
278 Bay St.





Become a NOWC Sustaining Donor

For 2026, the NOWC has a goal of securing 10 new monthly donors! The first ten new monthly donors will receive a beautiful pin hand-crafted by local artisan Feral Wife (featured in the photo!)

Become a Sustaining Donor today!

Why consider becoming a monthly or sustaining donor?

By giving a small amount each month, you help create a consistent source of revenue that allows us to respond quickly to requests from women using the Centre, such as hygiene supplies, water bottles, bus passes, grocery cards, Good Food Coupons, winter gloves/hats. Monthly support also allows us to meet our increased rent expense and other costs associated with moving, plan specific programs, keep our resource centre updated, and build our LU Bursary fund.

For more information on how to set up a monthly Donation through Canada Helps or by PAD through your financial institution, visit our ['Donate' page](#) or contact Lori at admin@nowoc.org to arrange



Stay tuned for upcoming programming in the spring!



**GOOD
FOOD
BOX**

March Orders

ORDER your GFB from your host site by **March 9th**

PICK UP from your host site on **March 18th**

Community Events & Resources

Commemorations and Days of Recognition for this month:

- **MARCH 8th** is **International Women's Day**
- **MARCH 21st** is **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**
- **MARCH 28th** is **International Women in Music Day**
- **MARCH 31st** is **International Transgender Day of Visibility**

Newcomer Legal Clinic Open House

Join the Newcomer Legal Clinic at their OPEN HOUSE on **Thursday, March 12, from 12 PM to 2 PM** to meet the team and see their new location at 12 Cumberland St N

[Learn more](#)

Join us for an

OPEN HOUSE

at our new location



- Light refreshments,
- meet the team,
- and mingle with the community.

Thursday, **March 12**, from **12PM to 2PM**
12 Cumberland St N, Thunder Bay, ON P7A 4K9

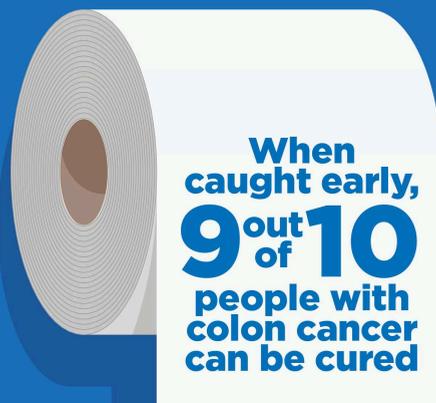


**NEWCOMER
LEGAL CLINIC**

March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month

This Colon Cancer Awareness Month, screen for colon cancer in the privacy of your home with a fecal immunochemical test (FIT) kit.

Visit tbrhsc.net/colon-cancer-screening for more information, including eligibility.



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**North West
Regional Cancer Program**
Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario)

- **March 5th | IWD Flag Raising** with the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre on March 5th 10am at City Hall
- **March 8th | IWD event** with TBMC and Tapestry (details shared above)
- **March 12th | Newcomer Legal Clinic's** Open house (details shared above)
- **March 13th to 15th |** The **Indigenous Students Association** is hosting their **36th annual Pow Wow** from **March 13th to 15th** at the Lakehead University LU Hangar. Join for a powerful weekend of culture, community, and celebration - see the poster below for more details or [visit their website](#)
- **March 26th | Retirement Celebration** at the NOWC, a drop-in event and bon voyage to Gwen after 30 years at the Centre (poster and details above)
- **March 28th | Land Back Cabaret Fundraiser**, a night of burlesque, live music, and spoken word poetry in support of Land Defence Alliance. Doors open at 7pm at the Paramount Theatre. 19+ event. Get your [tickets](#) today!



INDIGENOUS STUDENTS ASSOCIATION 36TH ANNUAL POWWOW



MAR 13-15



Lakehead University Hangar
955 Sanders Dr, Thunder Bay ON

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| | <p>FRIDAY WARM UPS 6:00 PM</p> | <p>Master of Ceremonies Todd Genno Biigtigong Nishnaabeg</p> | <p>Host Drum Walking Bear Ginoogaming First Nation</p> | |
| | <p>SATURDAY GRAND ENTRY 12:00 PM TRADITIONAL FEAST 5:00 PM GRAND ENTRY 6:00 PM</p> | <p>Arena Director Dustin Gagne Biigtigong Nishnaabeg</p> | <p>Woman Head Dancer Nevaeh Morriseau Animikii Wajiw Nishnaabeg</p> | |
| | <p>SUNDAY GRAND ENTRY 12:00 PM</p> | <p>Spiritual Advisor Carmela Moses Biigtigong Nishnaabeg</p> | <p>Man Head Dancer Adam Hubbard Whitesand First Nation</p> | |



Lakehead UNIVERSITY

Indigenous Initiatives





BURLESQUE | LIVE MUSIC | SPOKEN WORD | 19+

Join us for an evening of fun performances with all proceeds going towards Land Defence Alliance.

**MARCH
28TH 2026**

**DOORS OPEN AT 7:00PM
SHOW AT 7:30 - 9:30PM**

Purchase Tickets at Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/land-back-cabaret-fundraiser-tickets-1978194555166?aff=oddtcreator>

****limited ticket sales at the door****

**THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE
24 COURT STREET SOUTH, THUNDER BAY, ON**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: LANDBACKCABARET@GMAIL.COM

Resources

- **Extended hours are in effect!** The **Care Bus** will be operating from **9:30AM – 9:30PM until the end of March 31st**. The bus is free for anyone that needs a safe place to stay warm and get around town. You can get in touch with an Outreach Worker during operating hours by calling 807-632-9732.
- **P.A.C.E. Warming Centre** is now open every day: **weekdays from 8am - 8:30pm and weekends from 9am - 8:30pm**.
- Join **CREVAW** for a webinar, "Considering Children's Perspectives on Contact with their Father in the context of Post-Separation Intimate Partner Violence" on **Monday, March 9th from 1pm to 2:30pm EST. Register today!**
- Join the **Chanterelle Alliance** on **Tuesday, March 17th at 2pm EST** for an analysis of **Bill C-16, the Protecting Victims Act**, this webinar will explore what's included in the bill and its implications for women and gender-diverse people in Canada. **Register today!**
- **Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses** reviews mainstream media reports of femicides and shares a snapshot of their research monthly. The

recently shared their [January Femicide Snapshot](#), additional insights can be found on their [website](#)

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 Caro at navigator@nwowc.org or by phone (807) 935-8042.

Sexual Violence Program: Supporting Survivors

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 is currently one Sexual Violence Counsellor working out of Faye Peterson offering a 20-week individual counselling program.

To access counselling for any kind of sexual violence (recent or past), you can call Faye Peterson House's 24/7 Crisis Line: (807) 345-045. **You do not need to access shelter services or report to police to access counselling.**



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

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



In partnership with:
Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre

www.nwowomenscentre.org



NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE
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Mutual Aid Opportunity

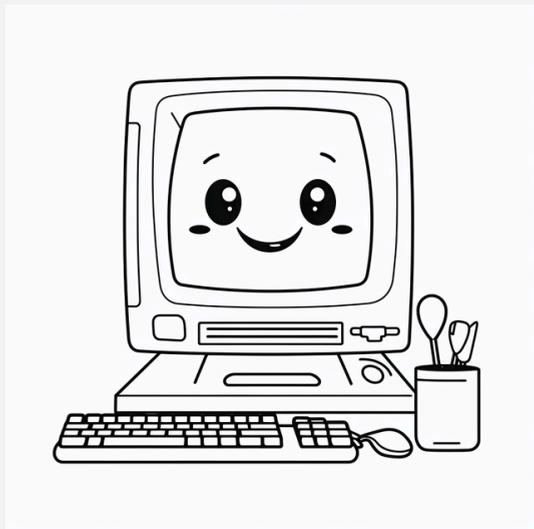


While we continue to advocate for changes to policies and practices that make women disproportionately vulnerable to violence and poverty, we know that access to some basic material items can still be helpful. We also recognize the importance of taking care of one another, and we know that many NOWC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



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 Caro at 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.

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

278 Bay Street, Suite #201, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 1R8

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



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[Unsubscribe](#)

