



AWHsome

Newsletter of Advancement of Women Halton

October 2023, Issue # 4

AWH is a collaborative of twenty women's groups and social agencies that advocate and amplify the voice of women. The monthly meetings give us an opportunity to hear about the activities and challenges of member organizations. This newsletter is another avenue for readers to learn about AWH member activities.



A Message from the Chair - Anne Douglas

Welcome to AWH 2023-24.

We plan to continue the four committees established last year—Health, Income, Education and Childcare, and Democracy. As an organization, our influential impact on decision makers is strong if we focus on a limited number of topics to allow adequate research time.

Last year 2022-23 was very active. We wrote eight letters to politicians; signed on to support two organization's letters; wrote three briefs regarding the Ontario Government Budget, Early Learning and Childcare and the Halton Region Strategic Business Plan; met with five politicians; contributed to an August article *Halton Non-Profits Struggling Without Sustained Funding* published in the Metroland papers; and had eight speakers at the AWH general meetings and supported many events sponsored by AWH members.

I am looking forward to working with the enlightened, energetic AWH members for an advocacy-strong 2023-24.

Anne Douglas
Chair, AWH

Below you can read about the summer activities of some of our member organizations.



On August 27th CCAH celebrated Culture Day at Veronica Tyrrell Park. It was wonderful to see how popular the park has become.



CCAH President Andrew Tyrrell and his wife Ann-Marie



In June 2023, building on the momentum and cross-partisan support, MP Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) put forward a new motion for a National Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform ([motion M-86](#)). This motion will be debated in the fall of 2023 and voted on either in the fall of 2023 or early 2024.

What is a Citizens’ Assembly?

A Citizen’s Assembly is a “mini-public” convened to study and give recommendations on a specific issue.

A National Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform:

- Is a non-partisan, independent, trusted process
- Is composed of citizens selected at random, like a jury
- Includes Canadians from all walks of life, with special care to ensure that participants reflect Canadian society, including by age, gender, ethnicity and region of Canada
- Engages citizens to learn from experts, thoughtfully consider an issue, and make a recommendation
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Without pre-judging various kinds of electoral systems, a citizens’ assembly will review options to improve our current electoral system. They would be free to recommend keeping the status quo (first-past-the-post), ranked ballots, or a proportional system (including proportional ranked ballots, or any other made-for-Canada PR).



The Canada Disability Act (passed in June 2023) will now enter the regulatory phase to tackle issues including but not limited to:

- Eligibility requirements.
- Impact on other benefits.
- The amount of the budget itself.
- To address the important budgeting of the CDB, the Budget and benefit campaign will be on-going until the budget is released in February-March 2024
- Plan Institute's ongoing commitments in this process
- Advocacy for:
- A co-creation model to ensure people with disabilities are part of the actual development process, not just consulted
- Expedient implementation of the benefit that is also not at the cost of incomplete and rushed considerations of other key factors
- Catering to the most vulnerable and hardest to reach because in doing so we capture the needs of everyone

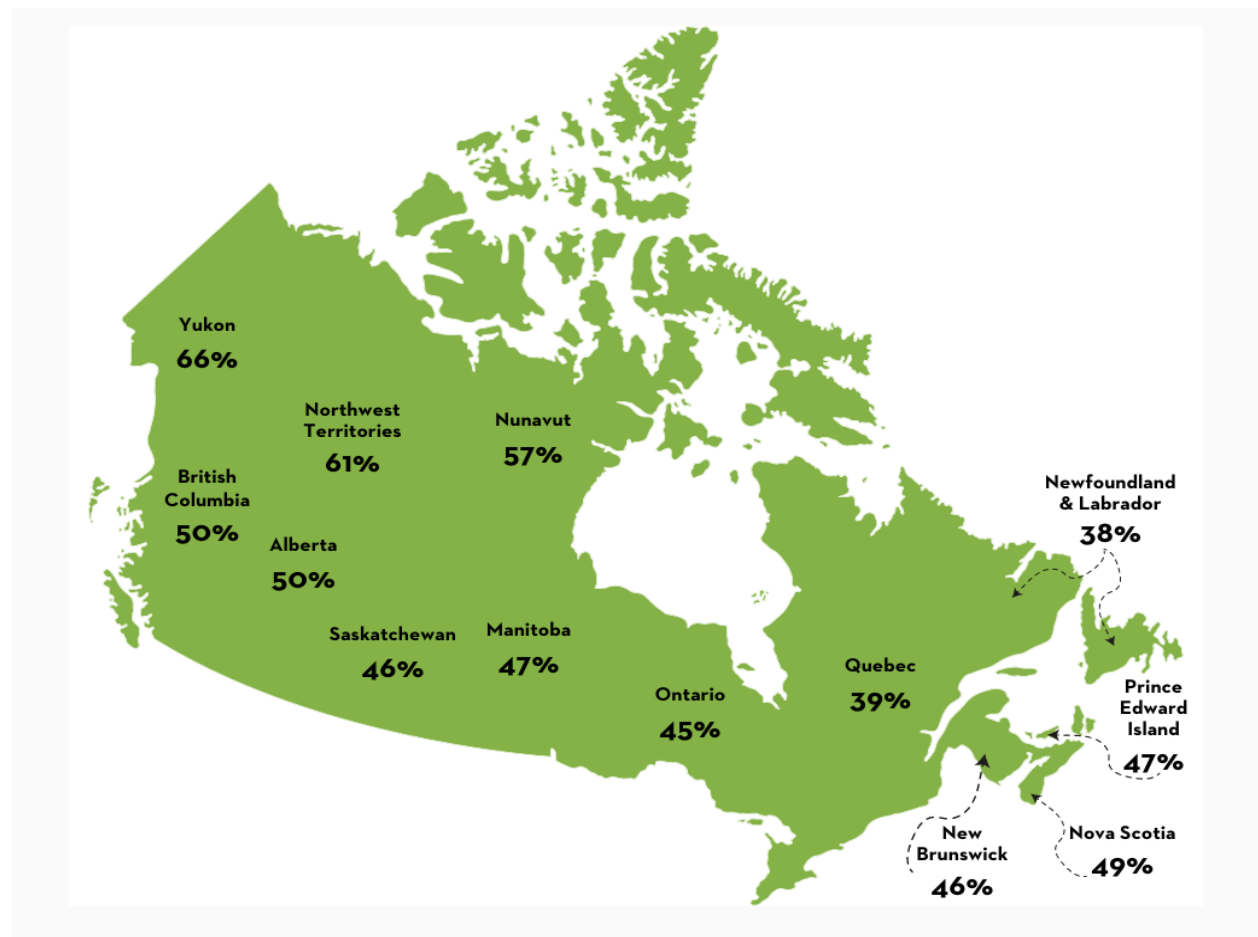


Violence Against Women

83% of all police-reported domestic assaults are against women. **This pattern is consistent for every province and territory across Canada. Violence against women and girls happens because they are women and girls, and the social expectations and inequality of their gender – that's why it's called gender-based violence.**

[Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres \(OCRCC\)](#) stands in solidarity with those affected by gender-based violence. Much work remains to prevent femicide:

In 2018, these percentages of women reported having experienced physical or sexual assault since the age of 15:



On June 19 Halton Region declared an intimate partner violence epidemic in Oakville and Burlington as well as Milton and Halton Hills. More than 3,500 calls reporting IPV were made to Halton Police last year



Callum Wallace kicked off the flight on his single-engine plane a few weeks ago from Burlington Airpark to build awareness for affordable housing and raise \$1 million for Home Suite Hope (HSH), an Oakville charity.

The idea of Flight for Hope to support HSH's campaign for building affordable housing for homeless mothers has garnered attention from across continents since its announcement last year.

On this trip, the 28-year-old pilot will fly for ten weeks with 75 stops across 26 countries. With the initial touchdowns at Quebec and Newfoundland after kicking off the journey, Wallace stopped at Greenland, Iceland, Scotland, Wales, Spain and Italy. Upon reaching Greece, he had to wait for a few days to get the front oil seal replaced in the aircraft.

Wallace's itinerary in Asia started with Egypt early this month and continued through UAE, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia.

This was the first time Wallace flew into Asia himself. "From Nagpur (India) through to Indonesia is considered the intertropical convergence zone, which means lots of weather activity happens there always. I was lucky to have good weather for the most part except for going into Nagpur." Since the single-engine aircraft does not have onboard weather abilities like airlines or access to check the weather online, flying to India was challenging for Wallace. He is grateful to the aviation enthusiast from Mississauga who "was tracking me LIVE and calling me on my satellite phone to guide the direction to go!"

Though the original route included New Zealand, New Caledonia replaced it, due to time and weather considerations. Callum visited Fiji, American Samoa, Kiribati (Christmas Island) and now Hawaii (USA), where he is waiting for good weather for the Atlantic crossing to California and home.



GRAN member's African Story on the **Right to Food Campaign**

In 1965/66, with a brand new teaching certificate from UBC, I started at my first school, Rustenburg High School for Girls in Cape Town, South Africa, where I taught children of English and Africaans background. It was the height of Apartheid and so I was unable to teach children of Black or Coloured background. My school catered to quite wealthy students so there was no problem about food security.

In 2000, I returned to teach at Farmerfield School, a small grade one to ten school in the rural area outside Grahamstown (now called Makhanda), where I had the pleasure of working with children and teachers of Xhosa ethnic background. I was surprised that no one brought food to school but waited until they got home to eat. Some children had to walk many miles to school making the fast even longer. Twice a week, a truck would roll up mid-morning to deliver many loaves of bread, packages of peanut butter in wax paper, and an orange powder, the equivalent of Tang. Under the supervision of a teacher, the senior girls made up the drink powder in a bucket with water from a tank in the courtyard, stirred it with a stick cut from a nearby bush, and cut thick slices of bread on which they layered a smear of peanut butter. The younger children lined up carrying a small cup from home and were served a drink and one slice of bread and peanut butter. The lucky children at the end of the line were given the wax paper to lick off any remaining peanut butter. A rooster used to visit that room afterwards hoping for a few crumbs from this event. Several times, I had to chase it out if I had a class in that room!

When I returned to the school in 2017, I was delighted to find that the school buildings had been greatly improved (no holes in the floors or broken windows) and there was now a proper toilet facility for the girls. And there was a new small building for the library which still had a few of the books I had delivered on my previous visit. We did not stay long because lunch was about to be served. I was so pleased that the learners were being fed a hot meal in the middle of the day.

However, a brief dive into the school meal programs in the Eastern Cape, has revealed that schools are struggling to keep up with the meal program. Even though it is often the only meal of the day for many of the children, the government is providing insufficient funds for even one healthy meal, or the funds arrive late because of an "administrative blunder". Principals are spending a great deal of their time seeking sources of food, and kitchens at schools are often inadequate. Food insecurity for school children is a growing problem in Africa and also in our own Canadian schools, which is why I am so pleased that the GRAN campaign this year is focused on the Right to Food.



Ontario Health Coalition

Massive protests marked opening day of the Legislature: more than 8,000 came out to decry Ford's hospital privatization on September 25th.

Thousands converged at protests across the province in opposition to the Ford government's health care privatization plans on Monday and Tuesday. Together, we set the tone for the opening of the legislature and set health care privatization as a key issue for our province. The goal? To show the Ford government that the people of Ontario will not tolerate the privatization of our public hospitals & public health care. We did just that. A heartfelt thank you to all of you who did so much work to organize such a huge and powerful event.

Toronto: Between 8,000 and 10,000 people filled the lawn at Queen's Park to set the tone on opening day of the Legislature. Buses came from towns across mid- and Southern Ontario. There was an alternate event arranged on Tuesday, September 26th to accommodate those in the Jewish community who could not attend opening day of the legislature as it was set on Yom Kippur. Both events were attended by all three opposition leaders who reaffirmed their support against the Ford government's health care privatization plans.



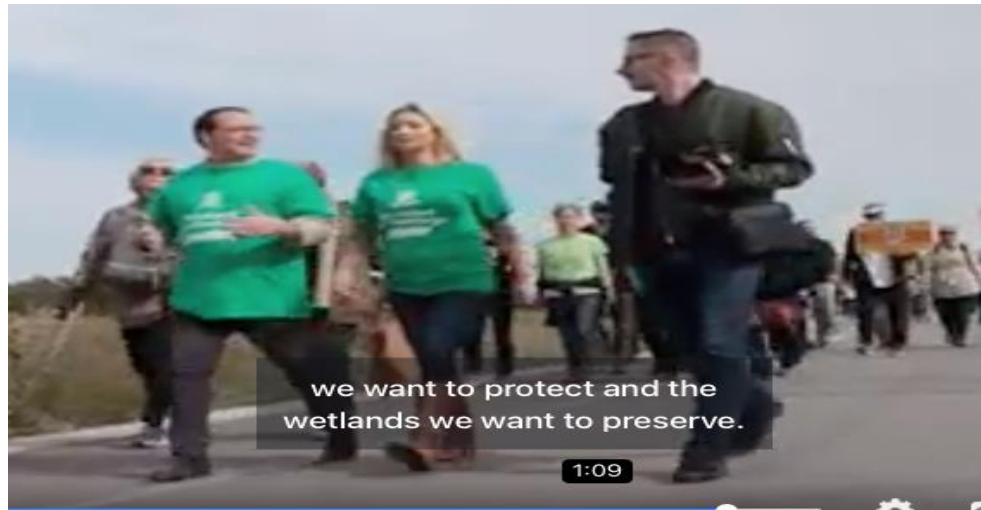
The Battle of the Chefs event to support Food4Kids Halton is being held on Monday November 6th at the Oakville Conference Centre, from 6-9pm. A scrumptious showcase of Chefs' signature appetizers & bakery delights. Guests vote on their Top Chef. You can see more info on their website at www.food4kidshalton.ca



On a glorious September 16th , Bev LeFrancois and Members of GASP attended a march at Queens Park to demand an end to fossil fuels.



Harvest Walk October 14, 2023



Mike Schreiner leading the 2022 walk along the proposed route of the 413

Bolton Walk North - 10:00 am - Noon

Meet at Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness (park near the baseball diamond) and walk to the walk to the rally by the river, then loop back for sign-waving at the intersection of King and Queen . This walk is hosted by GASP and SCAN. A bus will be travelling to the starting point of this walk from the western GTA. GASP expects to confirm the pick up point(s) soon.

The two walks in Bolton will be about 2 km, on sidewalks and some grass, with an option to car pool back to the starting point.

More details, a map, a songbook and some ideas for home-made signs are all available on the [Harvest Walk website](#).

With all the excitement of the Greenbelt victory still in the air, we expect this to be an energizing and celebratory event - so we hope to see you there!



Child Care Now is excited to announce that we will be hosting a [National Child Care Advocacy Assembly](#) this November! We hope you will consider joining us either in Ottawa or virtually on November 18 and 19, 2023.

Canadian Womens Foundation

In the 2010s, it became mandatory for health researchers applying for federal research grants to say whether they considered issues of sex and gender in their proposals. Only four years ago did it become mandatory for those considerations to be evaluated and used as a 'scorable factor' in grant applications.

What does this mean today? Do health researchers always include diverse women and Two Spirit, trans, and non-binary people in their clinical trials in Canada?

No, not necessarily. Medical research is a complicated mosaic, supported by lots of different parties, led by lots of different researchers.

The gender gap in medical research is going to be a complex one to address. Men have historically been the "normal human prototype" in clinical trials.

Consider cardiovascular disease, the #1 cause of death for women. Dr. Tara Sedlak, the only certified Women's Heart Health Cardiologist in Canada, said there are "specific risk factors that just don't occur in men." She also said that, since most research is done in men, these risk factors "simply weren't explored."

We need to dig deeper for gender justice and equality.

International Basic Income Week was September 18-24.

That was the week MPs resumed sitting in Ottawa and a great time for a show of support for a basic income guarantee in Canada. There were events worldwide and in Canada supporters posted profile pictures of themselves on Facebook and Twitter with the motto "Basic Income: Civilisation at its best!"

The 2024 BIG Forum

This unique pan-Canadian forum devoted to a basic income guarantee and its connections to many crises this country faces is being held May 23-26, 2024, in Ottawa (and virtually). There is a diverse group of organizers and an exciting and growing lineup of speakers and sponsors. You'll want to **Save the Date** now and plan to attend or have your community or organization represented. Some of you might want to present at the Forum and send a proposal to us in the fall when we open a Call for Participation.

Hamilton Social Work Action Committee organised a gripping Town Hall on September 20th

TOWN HALL

'Frozen in Time' for 5 Years: Ontario's Social Assistance Rates

Wed. Sept.20 @ 7-8 p.m.

SPONSORS:
Hamilton Social Work Action Committee
Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction

ACORN
Hamilton

SPRC
Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton

CAMPAIGN FOR ADEQUATE WELFARE AND DISABILITY BENEFITS
RAISE THE RATES

CO-HOSTS:
Sandy Shaw
MPP, West Hamilton, Dundas & Ancaster

Tom Cooper
Director, Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty Reduction

SPEAKERS:
Dr. Peter Graefe, McMaster University: Research report on the Effects of Covid-19 on recipients of ODSP

Sara Mayo, Social Planning and Research Council, Hamilton: Inadequacy of the Personal Needs Allowance

Dr. Nadeem Akhtar, Psychiatrist, Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster

Laura Cattari, Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, the Canadian Disability Benefit

Monique Taylor, MPP: Critic for Min. of Children, Community and Social Services

Tamra Smith, Lived experience with OW and ODSP. "It could happen to you!"

Denise Davy, Author of "Her name was Margaret: Life and death on the streets" Published 2021

ACORN member, Lived experience with Ontario Works

Register for meeting here



Our Halton

www.cdhalton.ca



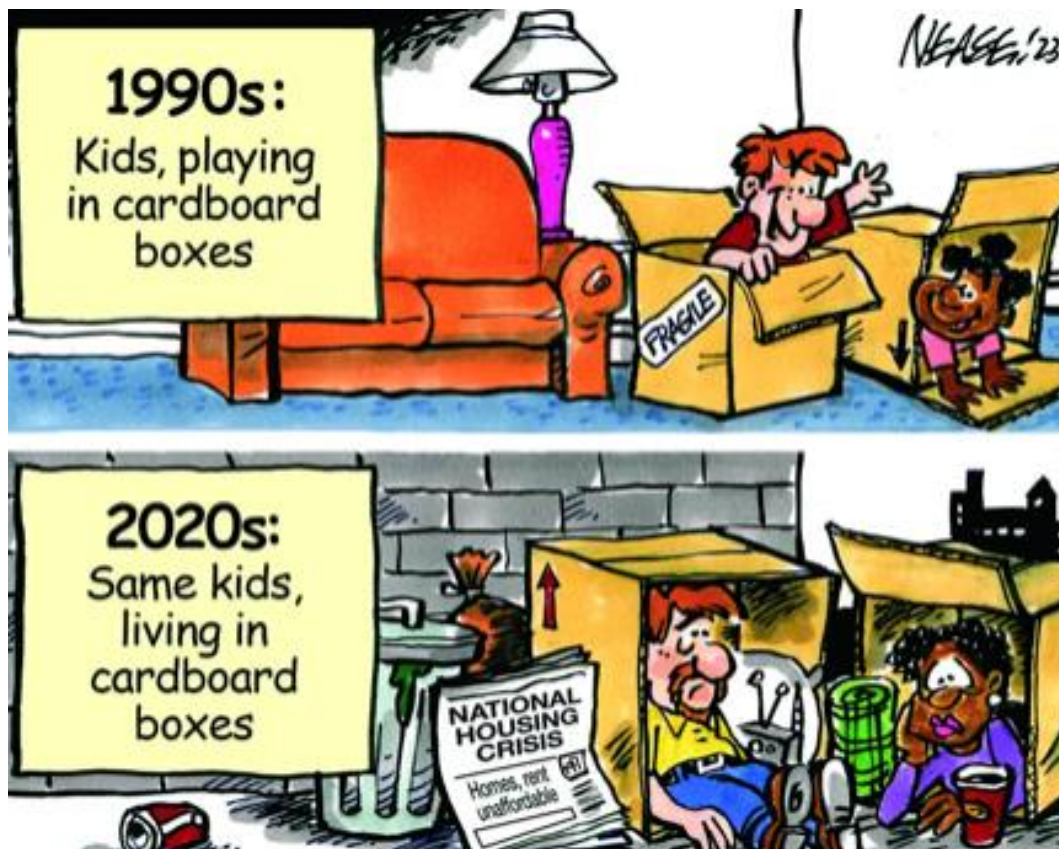
INCOME, INEQUALITY & POVERTY

Join us for a presentation on Issue Two of the Our Halton Series, followed by a community conversation on how to use the information and what it means for us collectively. Our Halton uses 2021 Census Data to highlight the changing socio-demographic characteristics of Halton Region.

October 12, 2023
1:00pm to 2:30 pm
Via ZOOM

Registration at:
cdhalton/events

Register by October 10 @12pm
ZOOM vertical meeting link
will be sent to the email provided in the
registration one day before the event



Watch out for issue #5 of AWHsome in January 2024



grandmothers
Advocacy Network



Mouvement de soutien des
grands-mères



oomama



Gasp4Change

GRAND(M)OTHERS ACT
FOR THE PLANET

THRIVE
counselling



Fair Vote Canada
Représentation
équitable
au Canada

