



AWHsome

Newsletter of Advancement of Women Halton

January 2024, Issue #5



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

The 2024 year is dawning with renewed hope! The past year had challenges, but there were successes. The provincial government stepped back from the Greenbelt. The National Childcare agreement passed, and the province reluctantly raised the minimum salaries of the childcare workers to attract stable, robust staffing--now to get more childcare spaces. Canada Disability Benefit Act was passed by the federal government to give additional financial support for people living with disabilities. The challenge for 2024 is to get the money into the pockets of the people who are living far below the poverty line. COP28 agreement acknowledged that the burning of fossil fuels plays a significant role in climate change. The shortage of labour because of retiring baby boomers, is starting to close the income gap. Legislation to protect the environment and improve the standard of living for low and middle income earners is a major accomplishment for 2024.

AWH is in a unique position. We have members with a diverse, insightful knowledge base with good writing skills. AWH is free to advocate on behalf of service agencies and our advocacy partners because we are not dependent on corporate or government financial support. The advocacy focus for 2022-24 is health care, education, income security and democracy.

May 2024 be the year of peace and inclusion!

Anne Douglas

SAVE THE DATE



When: Wednesday March 6th. 6.30 - 9.00pm

Where: Oakville Conference and Banquet Centre, 2515 Wyecroft Rd Oakville.

The Women of Halton Action Movement (WHAM) brings back their annual celebration of International Womens Day in 2024 with a powerhouse speaker – Canadian Platinum selling recording artist Jully Black. The celebration helps to support SAVIS, (Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services) and CW4WA, (Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan). This event on March 6, 2024, is extra special, as it marks not only the 20th anniversary of The Dinner Party celebrating IWD, but also, the 40th anniversary of WHAM's inception -- making it one of the longest serving feminist lobby groups in Ontario.

Price: \$90 includes dinner, keynote presentation, entertainment

Find out more at www.thedinnerpartyiwd.ca

Claire Cameron is a novelist and essayist. She assembled this piece using phrases from news reports of large floods in 12 countries that took place between Sept. 1-17, 2023.

The floods of September

September begins with rains. Floods have spanned the Northern Hemisphere with remarkable intensity. Average global temperatures across both land and sea. It was the first of a slew of extreme weather events. An area of low pressure developed, a black weather warning.

The rains came on the back of storms. The apples were almost ripe for harvesting. The desert floor a mud bath. A car that fell into a river. A bridge collapsed. The rushing water dragged. Most of the rivers in the region burst their banks.

Have you ever seen a desert become the sea? The downpour has lasted days. Rivers of mud that swept away cars and trash bins. A flooded alley. A road blocked. Floodwater gushing down the stairs. Diners in a restaurant climbed on to the roof to escape the rising waters. There were 1,000 lightning strikes.

“We were told to stay inside our homes,” he cries. Shelter-in-place orders were issued for a time. Residents wading through murky brown floodwaters. DJ Diplo claimed ... he and Chris Rock walked. Water was coming over the hood of the car. Around 75 crocodiles made a break for it. One motorcycle rider simply called Mr. Abe was swept away. If you stay there you die

Five people were reported missing. It’s a little tough to deal with, and a lot of people are in shock. Broken wood, whole cars lifted and dropped on top of scattered sea defences, tyres, fridges. The stock market canceling morning trading. I was astonished by the horror. Schools closed. He said they lost two boats

It fills your nostrils, part the scent of sewage part something that’s harder to identify. Porta potties couldn’t be emptied or cleaned. Body bags to allow corpses to be moved. An elderly woman who was trapped in an upstairs. Toddler being rescued by helicopter. A citizen had to navigate in a kayak. Bodies are still washing up.

You know how disasters can bring people together? Search-and-rescue crews work tirelessly. Tents, blankets, carpets, hygiene kits and food have been flown in. Trying to verify who is missing. Every single family has been affected. Many bodies have been washed out to sea. Authorities warned residents not to drink tap water. Rescue workers paused and knelt nearby to pray.

One of the most epic double rainbows I’ve ever seen. It’s how humanity should be. The failures of the dam’s crumbling infrastructure. The cost was “incalculable”. We extend our deepest condolences. I am afraid that the careless summers... will cease to exist.

And we will get through this as we always do.

*A lot happened this Fall. Some events followed by AWH
In October*

Community Services Recovery Fund

Burlington MP Karina Gould announced on October 12th. that 21 different organizations in Burlington have received funding for programs culminating in a total of \$1,728,234 through the **Community Services Recovery Fund**.



10th Anniversary Awards Night

On October 17, at the Lula Lounge in Toronto, Joey and Tina watched as Unlock Democracy founder Dave Meslin oversaw awards presented by a wide variety of donors to an even wider variety of groups, all devoted to promoting democracy across Canada

Mass LBP CEO Peter MacLeod presented to **Dr Sarah Schulman** of With Forward

Samara presented to **Erica Ifil** of The Hill Times

Norton, Rose, Fulbright LLP presented to **Hilary Lloyd** of The Body Shop

John Bebee of **Democratic Engagement Exchange** presented

to **Joel** of Yong Street Mission and **Denise** of Community Care Engagement Collaborative

Dave Meslin of **Unlock Democracy** presented to 15 year old **Joshua Oliverio** of Political Debrief

Operation Black Vote Canada presented to **Phiona Durrant** and **Morris Beckford**,

Aleksi Toivianen of **Vote 16 Canada** presented to student **Jayden Paquet Noiseux**

Ranked Ballot Initiative of Toronto presented to Don Valley Councillor **Shelley Carrol**

Local Choice Award PEI presented to **Barbara Dylla**

Alyson Sobol of **St Pauls/Regents Park CIVIX** presented

to Queen Alexandra Middle School teacher **Michelle Munk**

Canada-CARICOM Summit



On October 18, CCAH President, Andrew Tyrrell, attended the Canada-CARICOM Summit in Ottawa, Canada joining national and inter-national leaders for a night of collaboration. This was the first Canada-CARICOM Summit hosted on Canadian soil. Top row: Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender equality and Youth; Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada; Terrence Drew, Prime Minister of St Kitts & Nevis.

Middle row: Canadian singer Jully Black; Irfaan Ali, President of Guyana; Greg Fergus, Speaker of the House of Commons, Canada.

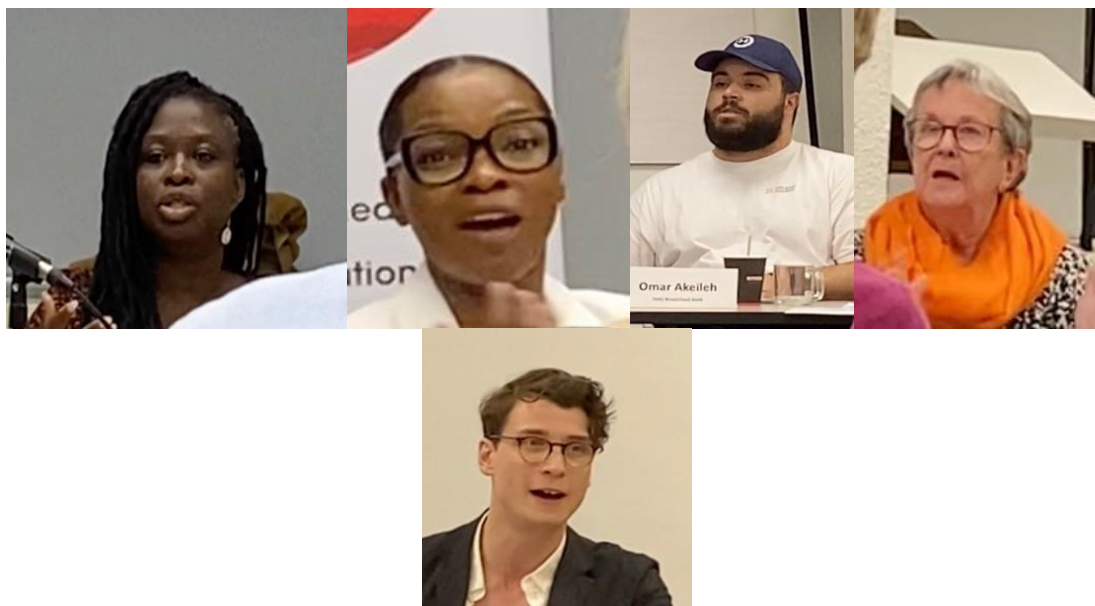
Bottom row: Filomena Tassi, Minister responsible for the federal economic development agency for Southern Ontario; Cameron Bailey, CEO of TIFF; Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica.



Hunger Hurts: Local and Global Paths to Food Justice

On Thursday October 19, Greater Toronto Area (GTA) GRAN hosted over 60 people gathered to learn about issues related to the Right to Food. This event, entitled *"Hunger Hurts: Local and Global Paths to Food Justice"*, brought together representatives of organizations working to combat food insecurity.

Structured as a conversation among our four guest speakers, the articulate and passionate panelists were (from left to right): Omar Akeileh, Policy and Engagement Specialist at the Daily Bread Food Bank; Pat Dolan, past Co-Chair of GRAN; Minerva Saddler Gray, Partnerships and Engagement Manager for ONE.org Canada; and Ama Deawuo, Executive Director of SeedChange Canada.



Topics included the dramatic increase in poverty and food insecurity, both locally and globally. Even those of us who considered ourselves knowledgeable about the problems were shocked by the troubling statistics. We heard that, locally, housing is absorbing most of a working person's income in Toronto, while for small-scale farmers worldwide, industrial agriculture firms are depleting the quantity and quality of the soil. There was hope, however, in the conclusions of each panelist, that public awareness and action are possible remedies. The recent changes in Greenbelt policies in Ontario created by public outcry, remind us that groups of concerned citizens do have a voice and can push for change.



Bev wrote:

On Oct 19th Women of Halton Action Movement (WHAM) had their annual gathering to touch base with feminists working to improve the status of women. Covid had made meeting in person difficult, so this was a welcomed opportunity to check in with like-minded friends and activists. After sharing a meal, numerous issues were named with special attention to the increasing gender-based violence throughout the world. Gender apartheid in Afghanistan and local trafficking of women and partner abuse were highlighted. Violence against Mother Earth and our responsibility to ensure a future for the young also drives us to address climate change.

These are difficult issues, so time spent supporting each other is precious. Anne Douglas, Chairperson of Advancement of Women Halton (AWH), which represents 20 Halton groups concerned with the Status of Women, reminded us of the necessity of like-minded organizations working together for much needed change. Anne was joined by Carole Holmes, Silvia Samas, Linda Middaugh and Shelagh Nuttal who addressed issues of violence against women and the earth.

Carole Holmes of **GASP** read an article from One Earth, **“Women are the Key”**. Women are proven better leaders in times of crisis. Research studies have shown that women adopt innovative and preventative measures faster than men and women tend to think for the collective whole rather than themselves.

They are strong environmental organisers.

Women in power improve society, by enhancing lives, cutting carbon emissions, and creating peace. They turn their innate knowledge (as healers and nurturers) into action.



Papua new Guinea attorney Anne Kail wins a lawsuit against a global timber company that must pay back indigenous landowners

Linda Middaugh of **CW4WA** (Canadian Women For Women in Afghanistan) described the dire situation for women and girls in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime.

– It has been over 2 years since the Taliban took armed control of Afghanistan. Girls are not allowed to attend school beyond grade 3, women are not allowed to work outside of the home, not allowed in public parks, not allowed to go to beauty salons, must be covered head to toe in public, not allowed to travel without a male guardian, not allowed in government, not allowed to assemble in public. Linda called for the UN to initiate of the development and adoption of a new convention that criminalizes gender apartheid.



AWH members can let our MPs know we are concerned for the people of Afghanistan, especially girls and women.

All the WHAM guests remarked that it was inspiring to meet up “in person” again with Halton women who are the driving force behind social change.



**Grandmothers to
Grandmothers**

**October 24-26 International Grandmothers Gathering
(IGG2023)**

Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Steven Lewis Foundation, grandmothers gathered simultaneously in Canada, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. In Canada grandmothers connected at the Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg. The theme this year was Reflect, Rejuvenate, and Renew!



For more about the gathering visit www.theslf.org/IGG2023

Basic Income: It still matters.

This one-day conference at Hamilton City Library on October 27 was presented by **the Hamilton Round Table for Poverty Reduction**. **Kim Martin**, of the Social Planning and Research Council noted that the basic income pilot project initiated by Kathleen Wynne's liberals was situated in Hamilton, Brantford and Lindsey and affected the lives of 4000 people. Although it was abruptly terminated by the Ford conservatives, so that hard evidence was incomplete, there was a wealth of anecdotal experience and qualitative data to demonstrate its value and success.

She welcomed former Premier **Kathleen Wynne** to bring us hope and inspiration. Ms Wynne said it is easy to be grumpy these days, but there is a path to a better place. She fondly remembered the late Senator Hugh Segal, author of "Bootstraps need Boots" and designer of the pilot project. She had recently been at the Senate Committee hearings on Senator Kim Pate's Bill S233 and said it was bittersweet to be reminding senators of the work done by their former colleague. The Senate committee was told by the Parliamentary Budget Officer that we spend \$80 billion annually on poverty programs. It will cost \$80 billion to fund basic Income, but costs will be reduced to \$40 billion if existing programs are changed as a result.

Ms Wynne talked of Martin Luther King (quoting abolitionist Theodore Parker,) who said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." She noted that Martin Luther King went on, "But it does not do that by itself. You have a role in making that happen." She urged us all not to stay silent.



Nobel Prize in Economics

Harvard professor Claudia Goldin was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in October for “having advanced our understanding of women’s labour market outcomes.” Goldin analysed over 200 years of data from U.S. labour. In the U.S. women currently make about 82 cents for every dollar a man earns. Historically Goldin found that differences in education and occupational choices could explain this gap in earnings. More recently, Goldin looked at the current earnings difference between men and women in the same occupation. She found that, when women and men hold the same job, men get paid more. Therefore, education and occupational choice cannot be totally to blame.

In one study of MBA students, Goldin found that men far out-earn their female counterparts a decade after they graduate from business school. The disparities in income were predominantly tied to women’s career interruptions and a reduction in weekly work hours linked to the birth of a child.

Goldin’s research also suggests that sex bias plays a role in the gender pay gap. For example, one of her most fascinating studies shed light on how symphony orchestras saw a significant reduction in gender bias when they implemented blind auditions. Using data from actual auditions, she and her co-author found that using a screen to conceal the musician’s identity resulted in the hiring of more women.





Canada's childcare program has slashed daycare fees in half on average, report says. [DAVE MCGINN](#) Globe and Mail OCTOBER 27, 2023

Canada's national childcare program has been a major achievement in reducing daycare fees by an average of 50 per cent, according to a new report, though concerns remain about the lack of capacity to accept new children in many cities.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives study recommends that provinces and territories adopt a set fee model and prioritize public and non-profit spaces over for-profit providers, as the program enters its next phase. "We regard the fee reduction as a big success. Parents who have a space, their fees have really dropped," said Martha Friendly, a co-author of the report.

The goal of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement, first announced in 2021, was to reduce fees by 50 per cent by the end of 2022, on the way to ultimately dropping fees to an average of \$10 a day by 2025.

The CCPA report highlights concerns over expansion of the program, with half of the cities surveyed saying they have no room to accept new children.

Based on the survey data, the report suggests that all jurisdictions should adopt a set fee model rather than allow market-based fees to be determined by centres. Currently, Quebec, P.E.I., Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Nunavut have set fees. Fees are higher in market-based fee systems, with a median of \$905 a month in Richmond BC. \$838 in Calgary and \$725 in Toronto. There can be large variation in how much parents pay Ms. Friendly said. A set fee system would not only be more fair and predictable for parents, it would also be more simple for government administration and monitoring, she added.

The success of the program in reducing fees now brings the issue of expanding the number of available childcare spaces to the fore, report co-author David Macdonald said. "The challenge now is that you've created a lot of additional demand. That's exactly what the program was for. Now we have to meet that demand for new spaces," he said.

In November



On November 2 Ancilla wrote, "Home not so long ago from the Burlington Performing Art Centre where **"One Burlington"** hosted "Music is the Universal Language" with 3 panelists telling their story as it relates to the subject, followed by musical performances that ran into overtime . To sum it up I would say it was an excellent evening."



Battle of the Chefs.



6 November was a night of gourmet delights, community spirit, and making a difference. Halton's premier culinary event! About 350 people came together to battle childhood hunger, one bite at a time.

7 Burlington restaurants competed in a battle of the chefs by titillating our taste buds. Over \$70,000 was raised at this fun event, to help prevent Halton children from going hungry.



The Town of Oakville, together with Halton Women's Place, unveiled purple benches to show solidarity and support for victims of domestic abuse. HWP executive director Laurie Hepburn said the purple benches are inspired by the Barb's Benches Project in honour of Barb Baillie, a Nova Scotia woman, married 25 years, who was strangled to death by her husband in 1990. Baillie left behind five children; the shocking tragedy in the close-knit community led to the creation of the purple bench project because Baillie would often escape the constant abuse by sitting on a park bench by the water. Hepburn said the benches are a symbol of support for domestic violence survivors and a tribute to those who have lost their lives.

The purple bench features informative plaques displaying emergency contact numbers for those in need and commemorating Barbara Baillie and others who have lost their lives and those who continue to experience domestic violence.



On November 9, CDH presented their third Our Halton report analysing Halton's census data. This one was on Housing and presented a horrifying picture. CCPA has calculated that the average hourly "rental wage" necessary to afford housing would be \$42.89. In Halton the average wage is currently at \$25.00. Market forces will not change this. Policy changes on housing development are essential. You can find the full report available for download at [Our Halton 2023: Housing | Community Development Halton \(cdhalton.ca\)](https://cdhalton.ca/Our-Halton-2023-Housing).



On November 13 the Ontario Healthcare Coalition hosted a webinar to discover the vision for health care of the candidates for the leadership of the Ontario Liberal party. Bonnie Crosbie, Nate Erskine-Smith, Ted Hsu, and Yasir Naqvi were all invited to speak. Mr. Naqvi declined.

All three candidates committed to defending public health care, by investing in recruiting and retaining medical professionals. Nate Erskine Smith promoted strong, integrated health teams to monitor and deliver wrap-around public health care for the future. Ted Hsu argued for removing geographical, financial and language barriers to care, investing in disease prevention and gathering data to evaluate outcomes. Without going into specifics, Bonnie Crombie presented a vision of Ontario in the future as a shining model of excellence in healthcare.



On November 16, The Walrus magazine, in conjunction with the Canadian Women's Foundation, hosted an event on Gender Based Violence at the Isabel Bader Theatre. Many people attended in person as well as 1,200 people on-line. A variety of speakers described the impact of gender-based violence on their communities. Anuradha Dugal of CWF spoke of the urgent need to include gender-based violence in emergency plans, since it is at times of upheaval and isolation that LGBTQ and Indigenous peoples are most vulnerable. The recording is available on the Walrus YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXGNTvTCwfM>.

(On December 21 Canadian Women's Foundation President and CEO Paulette Senior was appointed to the Senate. Congratulations Paulette!)



On November 18 Oakville-North Burlington M.P. Dam Damoff wrote

Affordable Housing

The Government of Canada is supporting the construction of 131 purpose-built rental apartments for residents of Oakville through \$55.7 million in fully repayable low-interest loans alongside. This 8-storey purpose-built rental apartment building is located as you can see in a developing residential neighbourhood close to schools, a hospital, parks, grocery stores, and major transit routes. The building includes 29 barrier-free homes as well as all common areas have been designed to be fully accessible and barrier-free.

This project was possible thanks to a fully repayable, low-interest loan from the National Housing Strategy's Rental Construction Financing Initiative.

Disability Benefit

The Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) is a cornerstone of Canada's Disability Inclusion Action Plan and has the potential to transform the lives of working-age Canadians with disabilities currently living in poverty. The CDB aims to reduce poverty and support the financial security of working-age Canadians with disabilities by supplementing, not replacing, existing federal, provincial, and territorial supports for people with disabilities. The Government of Canada is taking the next step in implementing the CDB, with the launch of the CDB Regulations Online Engagement Tool that will give all Canadians, but especially Canadians with disabilities and disability stakeholder organizations, the opportunity to have their say in the development and design of the benefit's regulations. This process allows for those who stand to benefit from the CDB to provide feedback on areas such as eligibility criteria, benefit amount, applications and payments, and administration. Canadians have until **December 21, 2023**, to provide feedback and it is also possible to submit comments by phone, video, or email for accessibility purposes. Additional opportunities to provide input will be available after the formal publication of the draft regulations, expected to take place sometime in 2024.



On November 22 the UN launched the first report for the Decade of Healthy Aging, entitled “Adding Life to Years.” (This study began in 2020, with reports scheduled in 2023, 2026 and 2029). Participants from all over the world attended on-line and in person at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

The report itself can be found at www.DecadeofHealthyAgeing.org.

We heard case studies from several countries. In Croatia, researchers were surprised to find seniors actively engaged in politics, further education, and physical activities, and changed the official mindset about seniors’ needs as a result. In Uganda, Covid lockdowns shut down public transport, preventing access to health clinics. So mobile teams of trained volunteers provided monitoring and primary care on a district nurse model, which proved efficient, effective, and popular and will become permanent. Beirut has transformed its many Lifelong Learning groups into a University for Seniors, where improvements in social isolation, mental and physical health are already reported. Portugal has developed a National Plan for Active Healthy Aging, with programs and supports at national and municipal levels. Japan has created a long-term care insurance system which has been enormously successful, allowing them to create integrated community health teams. As is the case everywhere, staffing has become a problem, so they used VAT as a fund for recruitment and training of staff and they have even developed care robots. Looking forward to the 2026 report!



On November 24 Oakville-North Burlington MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos wrote:

This week, Ministers Stan Cho and Sylvia Jones announced that our government is investing more than \$300 million over three years to help thousands of people launch careers as personal support workers in long-term care homes and in the home and community care sector. As part of the recruitment effort, students and recent graduates can receive up to \$25,400 in new incentives.

Recruiting more personal support workers is part of the Your Health plan to connect long-term care residents to more hours of direct care and expand home care services.

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1003868/ontario-recruiting-more-personal-support-workers-into-long-term-care-and-home-care>



HERhalton

A huge thank you to Burlington Mayor Marianne Meed Ward for bringing together HERhalton to discuss the need for more women in politics and how we can best support each other. HER (Halton Elected Representatives) Halton was born out of the mayor bringing women together last year and has since grown to a regular event to share ideas and experiences on being women in politics and public office.



On November 27 Fair Vote Canada hosted a zoom meeting with the Honorable Anita Anand, President of the Treasury Board, on the subject of Motion M86, requesting a Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform. Bronwen Bruch led the discussion, and 15 Oakville residents offered excellent reasons for supporting the motion. Onurcan Gokkaya, Ms. Anand's Oakville staffer, assured us that her door is always open and asked us for a letter summarising any concerns. A paper petition will be circulated by Fair Vote Canada in the coming weeks, for signatures to demonstrate widespread support for the motion. The vote will take place early in 2024.



On November 28, HEDR, (Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable) and SAVIS (Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Service) collaborated to host a wonderfully informative panel discussion on gender-based violence. Panelists Silvia Samsa (SAVIS), Carmela Bozzo (Halton Womens Place) and Keith Nakahara and Erin Cormier (Halton Regional Police) talked about the need to recognize the unique experiences and challenges faced by marginalized and vulnerable populations, and how to craft more effective strategies for prevention, support, and recovery.



On November 30, Child Care Now organised a National Day of Action for Childcare, with a rally, a phone blitz, social media messages and an open letter calling on the government to end the crisis shortage of licensed childcare spaces impacting thousands of kids and their families



And Minister Gould wore “dots for spots”

In December

On December 4, Ubuntu, the Burlington branch of the Stephen Lewis Foundation Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, hosted a vigil outside Burlington City Hall. This was a part of the UN Orange Campaign from November 25 to December 10 each year to colour the world orange and promote an end to violence against women.

Speakers included Burlington Mayor Marianne Meed Ward, Inspector Chris Newcombe of Halton Police Services and 2 remarkable students from Central High School. Burlington Pier was lit with orange lights to mark the Orange the World Campaign.

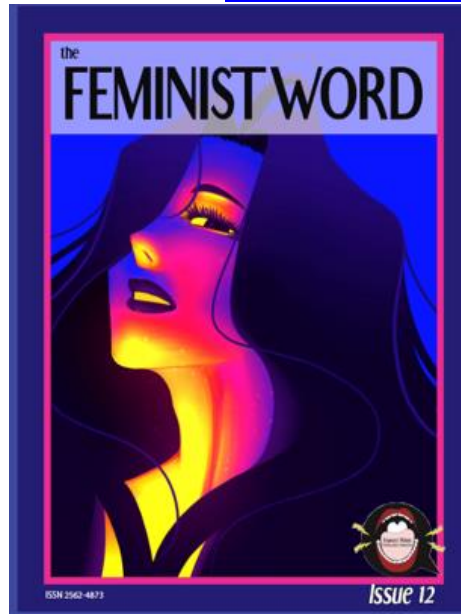


On Sunday Dec 10, GASPs joined a COP28 Candlelight Vigil in Oakville. The future of our children and grandchildren will be shaped by the outcome of COP28. GASP members gathered to focus on this important moment in the planet's history, to sing and dance and light candles to signify their hope.



On December 12 CRIAW published the 12th edition of The F (Feminist) Word
A wonderful, multicultural, anthology from young Canadian women.

You can find it at www.criaw-icref.ca



December 14th saw the first Fireside Chat with Dennis Windego, Indigenous Holistic healer.



Guided by Anishinabeg culture and ceremonies, Dennis empowers individuals and communities to reclaim their identity, heal from trauma, and connect with the land for holistic wellbeing.



December 20, Nova Scotia announced it will be providing defined pension plan coverage and extended health benefits for all employees who work in licensed early learning and childcare programs.



On December 21 the monthly AWH meeting became a joyful social event. This potluck seasonal celebration was also an opportunity to donate to Community Development Halton. Without their valuable research, we would not have the facts about unmet needs in Halton. The food was delicious, spirits were lifted, and \$300 was raised for CDH. If you would like to make a donation through AWH, please send an e-transfer to agrelltina@gmail.com

***Wishing you all a Happy New Year with lots of successful
campaigning in 2024***

Watch out for issue #6 of AWHsome in April 2024

