

BE **HERE FOR HER.**
WHOEVER SHE MAY BE.



Can We Count on You to Be Here for Her?

Stated simply, Regina and its neighbouring communities are at a crisis point when it comes to caring for our women and children.

Every day, the unthinkable happens: Women are being turned away after taking the brave, and sometimes dangerous, first step of asking for help. Why? Because we quite simply don't have the space or capacity to help everyone who knocks at the door of YWCA Regina.

What happens when those women are turned away? They go back to living on the streets, sometimes with their children in tow. Or they're forced to return to a violent home situation, sometimes losing their lives as a result.

As a proud resident of Regina, you'll agree that this is unacceptable.

And that's why we're asking for your caring and compassionate support as we create something extraordinary: a community hub that provides shelter, support, healing and love to vulnerable women, children and youth in Regina.

THE NEW YWCA CENTRE FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES WILL, QUITE LITERALLY, SAVE LIVES.

In 2019, Isabel Johnson Shelter turned away

**759 WOMEN
291 CHILDREN**

who were fleeing violence





Jess' Story

It's a sold-out crowd as Jess is introduced and steps out onto the stage. She stands at the podium, strong and confident. She isn't nervous because she's done this hundreds of times before.

As a successful award-winning entrepreneur, Jess is an inspiration and mentor to hundreds of women in Regina, across Canada, and around the world.

But there's one thing that gives her pause as she gets ready to speak. One thing she needs to prepare herself for every time she does this.

In the minutes, hours and days following her speech, she will receive hundreds of notes from women in the audience. Hundreds of women will reach out to her to say, that's me. I'm in pain, too. Thank you for being here for me.

What you don't get from seeing Jess' face on the cover of a magazine, or reading her impressive LinkedIn profile, is how much there is beneath the surface.

Jess grew up surrounded by abuse and dysfunction. She lived in and out of shelters, and was 11 when she got her first job. At 15, her family lost their house.

Jess knew deep inside that this wasn't the life for her.

**SHE KNEW SHE COULD
DO MORE AND BE MORE.**

With \$26 and a backpack full of belongings, she got on a bus to the city, registered herself for high school and lied about her age to find an apartment. All on her own.

Jess finished school and started working full time, but she soon found herself a single mother after fleeing an abusive relationship. However, she had a job she loved, working at a spa, and helping men and women feel good about themselves.

The owner noticed her hard work and made a deal with her: "I've never seen someone work so hard, and I'd like you to buy this spa from me." But, as a single mom, only 21 years old and supporting her father, there was no money to spare. They made a deal: Jess could take over the spa and had four years to pay the half-million dollars it would take to buy the business.

Jess was able to buy the business within just nine months, something that wouldn't have been possible without the counselling support she received through the YWCA.

Why Now?

The stark reality is that our aging facilities mean that women and their children are turned away on a daily basis. It's heartbreaking because all of us know that the need is growing rather than going away.

You may be surprised to learn that Saskatchewan has the highest rate of intimate partner violence in Canada. And not just slightly higher, but twice as high as the national average.

But our shelters and services are at full capacity.

Not only that, but the services that women and children need are spread throughout the city.

Just imagine that you're a woman who, with moments to spare before your abusive husband gets home, jumps in a cab with your children and a backpack full of belongings. You ask to be driven to the YWCA because you know it's a safe place. You arrive, tears running down your face, but trying to remain calm for the sake of the children, only to be told there isn't room.

Or you manage to find shelter, but the services you need to get back on your feet are spread all over the city. You have no income. No money for a cab.

No money for a bus. What are the chances you'll be able to make your way to all the places you need to go? Pretty slim.

The women and children who need our shelters currently struggle with complex challenges that can only be fully addressed by providing comprehensive, wraparound services and supports that are efficiently delivered and centrally located.

That's where the Centre for Women and Families comes into the story.



Saskatchewan's rate of interpersonal violence is

2X

the national average in Canada:

The highest of all Canadian Provinces.

A COMMUNITY HUB WITH ENORMOUS IMPACT.



“
The Centre for Women and Families has been designed for self-sustainability. This new building provides YWCA Regina and its partner agencies the ability to do our work in a way that is better for the community and provides strength and stability to the organizations. This Centre will offer stronger connection and greater scope of work with zero increase to operational cost.”

- Melissa Coomber-Bendtsen
CEO YWCA Regina



A look inside the Centre
Clockwise from top left:
The warm and welcoming lobby greets all to the Centre with open arms. The healing lodge sits at the centre of the site. A bird's-eye view of the Centre from the south. The North Facade of the Centre, with bright and large windows.



Why Us?

Like you, we at YWCA Regina recognize that everyone in our community deserves to live up to their full potential. They deserve to have their hopes and dreams come true. And they deserve to be surrounded by a supportive network of people and organizations that care about them.

But we know that the barriers placed in their way can seem insurmountable.

Poverty. Violence. Discrimination.

It doesn't take much for a woman to fade into the background. To become just another statistic.

To lose her identity and give up.

Fortunately, and thanks to the support of kind donors just like you, many of those women have found safety, security, employment, justice, happiness, health, and healing through the programs and services of YWCA Regina.

As Regina's oldest and largest organization focused on women, we are trusted and respected. Nationally, YWCAs are Canada's largest provider of women's shelters and, here in Regina, we offer the city's only homeless shelter and one of only three emergency domestic violence shelters that provides services for women and children.

We've been doing this for a long time. We know what works. We also know that it takes an entire community to move the needle and make real change.

The New Centre for Women & Families will...



Provide Cost-Effective Emergency Services

It costs about \$100,000 a year to support each woman who chronically finds herself accessing crisis and emergency services. By creating a hub of support and ease of access to services through YWCA Regina, that cost is cut by 50%



Reduce the Rates of Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

By reducing barriers and offering wraparound services, women and families will have increased access to legal aid, victim services and preventive primary health services.



Strengthen Long-Term Health

By bringing services together under one roof, marginalized women and their families will benefit from a harm reduction approach and trauma-informed care that is judgement-free.



Lower the Number of Women & Families in Crisis

By expanding the scope of services and support, the need for emergency responses will decline. Given that supportive housing for a woman costs about 70% less than providing her with shelter for a year, many more women will be reached.



Decrease the Number of Children in Care

By enhancing our ability to work with families, we'll reduce the number of children who are taken into care. At the same time, the Centre will support family stability and reunification, and work toward reconciliation.



Reduce the Number of Women Who Are Turned Away from Shelters

Because the Centre will increase the amount of affordable and supportive housing in Regina, fewer women will be turned away due to limited capacity. Additionally, the Centre's expanded scope of services will provide housing support to off-site locations.



Reduce Crises and Divert Community Costs

By doing our work in a better way, we can improve outcomes for women and families. By supporting families before crisis, we can also reduce costly emergency responses. Providing safe, supported, and affordable housing reduces community costs by \$80,000 per year.

WE ARE HERE FOR HER, WHOEVER SHE MAY BE AND WHATEVER SHE MAY NEED.



In 2019, our 24-hour emergency homeless shelter, My Aunt's Place, turned away

**1707 WOMEN &
611 CHILDREN**

due to lack of space

Leticia's Story

As the woman sits down beside her, Leticia can see pain and suffering. She searches the woman's eyes for a spark of hope, but there's none.

As a Resident Support Worker at the YWCA, Leticia sees this every day in the women who come in for help. And every day, those same women leave with a smile on their face and hope lighting up their eyes.

Thank you, they say. You see me. You're here for me. I don't feel so alone.

Leticia spreads hope to other women through her strength and resilience. She understands where they're coming from because she came from the same place. Look closer and you notice her beautiful eyes are wise beyond her years. They've seen things that most of us can't even imagine, but they are experiences she shares with many of her clients.

When Leticia was a baby in the 1960s, she was forcibly removed from her Indigenous mother's arms and adopted out to a white family in another community: a family that struggled with alcoholism. At 13, she found herself on the steps of child services.

All of this left Leticia with deep scars. She spent the next few decades on and off the streets, abusing drugs and alcohol, and doing anything she could think of to numb the pain. She had no family. No support. No love.

But what Leticia did have was a tiny glimmer of hope, and that was enough to bring her to My Aunt's Place five years ago. She was welcomed with open arms, and her healing journey began. With a safe and warm place to stay, the support of everyone around her and access to the services she needed, she thrived.

**“BEING ABLE TO HELP THESE WOMEN,
AND THEM REFLECTING BACK
AT ME WHERE I'VE BEEN AND
HOW FAR I'VE COME IS HUMBLING.”**

Joan's Story

You might recognize Joan's broad smile and deep laughter as you stop for a cup of coffee on your way to work every morning. Perhaps she's been serving you for years. If so, she'll be calling you by name and asking you about the latest events in your life.

You'll also know that if you ever needed a helping hand, Joan would be the first one to offer assistance. She's just that kind of person.

SHE REALLY SEES YOU. AND SHE'S ALWAYS THERE FOR YOU. KIND OF LIKE A GUARDIAN ANGEL.

But what you don't see is that Joan is a beloved resident of the YWCA's downtown location.

You see, Joan struggled with a severe alcohol addiction that left her jobless, alone and cut off from her children. She was regularly drinking a 40-ounce bottle of vodka each day and, had her sister not discovered her unconscious in her apartment, she's sure she'd be dead.

After some time in the hospital, Joan ended up at the YWCA Regina's My Aunt's Place. For the first time in her life, she was greeted with compassion, caring, and an environment that helped her thrive in her sobriety and stay her course.

YWCA was there for Joan, and now, she is there for the women of YWCA: Whether it's offering a helping hand to a woman hesitantly walking into the doors of YWCA for the first time, or welcoming visitors, volunteers, and everyone else with warm eyes and a kind heart, Joan has become an integral part of the family that helped her heal.

The YWCA has been her lifeline, and she can't wait to welcome women into the new Centre.





**PLEASE JOIN US, RIGHT
NOW, AND **BE HERE FOR HER**
WHOEVER SHE MAY BE.**

A Centre for Love & Compassion

Now imagine this: You're a woman who's fled violence. You and your children are living on the street. You're almost completely out of options.

But there's a glimmer of hope. A place that's bright and inviting. Above the doors is a sign: "Centre for Women and Families." Nobody knows that you're walking through those doors because you need help. You might just be going in to enjoy a coffee with friends at the café, make a donation, or shop in the thrift store.

No stigma. No barriers. All the services you need under one roof.

The new YWCA Centre for Women and Families will bring together, in one place, all the services you need to get back on your feet:

- Safe emergency housing
- Violence prevention education
- Affordable supportive housing
- Food and income security
- Support for gender and sexually diverse people
- Integrated crisis and triage services
- Legal advice
- Counseling and support groups
- Primary health services
- Indigenous healing and ceremonial space
- Community gathering space

By collaborating with other agencies, such as the Regina Sexual Assault Centre, Mobile Crisis Services and All Nations Hope Network, the YWCA Centre for Women and Families will serve the community's needs and provide space for drop-in and multiuse gatherings.

PLEASE JOIN US RIGHT NOW
AND BE **HERE FOR HER**
WHOEVER SHE MAY BE.

ywcaregina.com/capitalcampaign



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