



# 2014-15 annual report

ending violence against women

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# Letter from the Executive Director

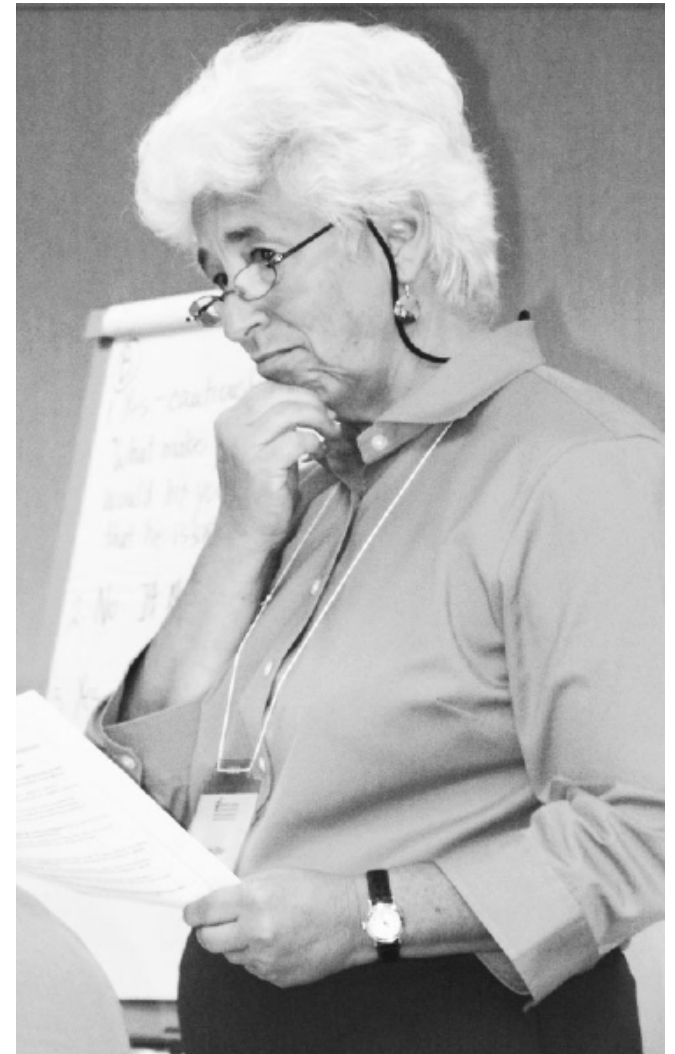
**“The future is not some place we are going,  
but one we are creating...” - John Schaar**

Many things have changed in the 27 years I have been at Springtide. When I began, I hand wrote proposals and our staff shared one typewriter. Today we have a computer network and spend a large part of our day “on line”. We can “work” for years with someone whom we can only identify through an email address. Some things, however, have not changed. Canada still has no national strategy on violence against women, there is no universal childcare program or available affordable housing in cities like Toronto.

Springtide has always chosen to change to meet the needs of the communities we serve. In 2014-2015 we began to expand the lens and language we use to understand and address the violence experienced by the communities we work with.

Language is powerful and can be used to exclude or include. During this past year SR engaged in a process to re-examine and change the language used in all of our programs and policies so that it better reflects and includes the range of people affected by gender-based violence and the many ways that abuse is manifested.

Our use of the term gender-based violence instead of violence against women includes all violence that is rooted in a culture of dominance that devalues and controls femininity, equating it with inferiority. Our struggle over the last 35 years for gender-specific language has evolved into a need for gender-inclusive language. We remain deeply committed to analysing and responding to male violence against women, while acknowledging that this is only part of gender-based violence. We are challenging ourselves to be more accountable to all survivors of gender-based violence.



# Letter from the Executive Director

Towards this end, some of the work we engaged in this past year includes:

- Development of a new on line course titled **Group Counselling: Intersectional Approaches for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence** designed to support those facilitating groups for survivors.
- **Beyond Borders: High Rise Communities Responding to Gender Based Violence** is working with 11 peer leaders from 4 cultural linguistic groups - Amharic, Bengali, Tagalog and Tamil - in 3 downtown Toronto, high rise communities.
- **Re-Imagining Parenting Possibilities Project** worked with community organizations, researchers and self-advocates to examine experiences of institutional and interpersonal harm that people labelled with intellectual disabilities face when hoping to exercise their right to parent.
- **Family Matters** ran workshops for queer and trans spectrum youth who have experienced harm in their families of origin. These workshops support participants in strengthening and practicing their emotional, social, and healthy relationship skills.

Change will continue at SR in the fall of 2015 when we welcome a new Executive Director. An intersectional understanding of gender-based violence is critical to developing creative and transformative future initiatives within our organization. I am confident that The Board of SR will hire someone who understands and shares this vision. Springtide has consistently had staff and volunteers who have the skills, the creativity, and the passion to think “outside the box”, take risks, and work together to end gender-based violence. As I prepare to retire I am grateful to have had the privilege of working alongside a diverse, committed group of agents of change. You make this world a better place. All of us at SR are grateful for all of you who support our work. Whatever you do and/or give, no matter how small makes a difference.

**Thank you.**



**Marsha Sfeir**

Executive Director

# Programs | Training for English Language Educators

Now in its ninth year, **Woman Abuse Affects Our Children** is a partnership with the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO). Each year, three face to face two-day trainings are held in different locations across Ontario.

In 2014-15, 95 teachers were trained in Toronto, Kingston, and from across the Province and are now better able to respond to children in their classrooms who have been exposed to abuse.

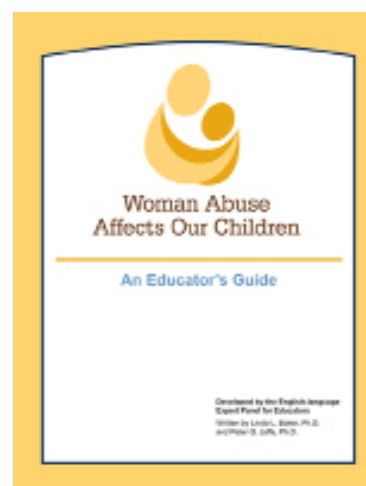
As a result of this initiative, outreach to their peers through workshops and information sessions are being done by over 990 trained teacher facilitators. 98% of the teachers report that, because of the training and/or materials, they are better equipped to recognize risks/warning signs of abuse and provide informed and appropriate support to children and their families.

## ***From a Toronto teacher:***

“Excellent. Thank you so much for a well-designed/well delivered course. The information was valuable and allowed me to think/feel more compassionate to individual students in abusive homes.”



Over 80,000 educators in Ontario have received some information on woman abuse.



## ***Woman Abuse Affects Our Children:***

A Participants Manual, is available free on Springtide's website:

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



## Programs | E-Learning

Over the past year we focused on four major e-learning projects:

### > **Be Aware, Prepare, Educate:**

#### **Make a Difference for Children Exposed**

**to Woman Abuse:** This course, launched in October, 2014 was developed for elementary school teachers in partnership with the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and with funding from the Ontario Women's Directorate.

Evaluations to date show that teachers find the course of use and they like that they can take the training at their own pace.

***As one teacher said,*** "This is a wonderful course, which I believe is both necessary and useful."

### > **Connecting Legal Services to Interpretation:**

In partnership with the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic and with funding from the Law Foundation of Ontario, Springtide Resources developed courses for legal service providers and spoken language interpreters on how to work better together.

The course for legal service providers launched in March, 2015 received Continuing Professional Development accreditation by the Law Society of Upper Canada. The interpreters' course will be launched in the fall of 2015.

The legal service providers who have participated in the course reported that they learned more about the role and expectations of an interpreter and also praised the ability to take the course when they have time.

### ***As one participant stated,***

"This was a great chance to learn more about translating and interpretation. I am now clear about the role of interpreters and the 'do's and don'ts' of how to utilize them."



# Programs | E-Learning

## > Group counselling: Intersectional Approaches for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence:

This course was designed and refined over the past year with support from consultants: Azza Abbarno, Paula Wansbrough, and Jacqueline Benn-John.

The course content was reviewed by an Advisory Committee of experts in the field and by Springtide Resources' staff. A pilot test of the course will happen in the fall of 2015.

## > Detect, Respond, Refer: Helping to End

**Woman Abuse:** This course for dental hygienists about their role in acknowledging gender-based violence continues to be offered and promoted to professionals across Canada by our partners: Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association, Canadian Dental Hygienists' Association, and British Columbia Dental Hygienists' Association.



A module slide from our latest Group Counselling e-learning course.



# Programs | Immigrant and Refugee Women

2015 was an invigorating year for the IRWP in the areas of cross-sector collaboration and partnerships, peer education and training and in the engagement of new audiences to raise awareness of emerging issues in immigration and Gender Based Violence (GBV).

To address the identified need of GBV organizations to work across sectors, we partnered with organizations in the HIV/ AIDS sector, and with community organizations, such as Central Neighbourhood House (CNH) who serve newcomer communities but lack the capacity to adequately respond to GBV.

With the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT), we co-organized a cross-sectoral day-long Knowledge Exchange, **Better Together** which was attended by over 80 individuals. The IRWP coordinator MC'd the event and panelists and presenters from HIV legal clinics, shelter workers and survivors shared their experiences. Speed dating for service providers gave attendees a fun chance to get to know as many people as possible from the different sectors, and we look forward to continuing to work jointly with the HIV / AIDs community to create

opportunities for workers across these fields to come together and strategize on how to better support survivors of violence.



Responding to Gender Based Violence in High Rise Communities

An exciting collaboration emerged this year between CNH's women's programming department and the IRWP at Springtide Resources with the Trillium funded, **Beyond Borders Project: High Rise Communities Responding to Gender Based Violence**. 2015 saw the completion of Year 1 with energizing results. 11 peer leaders from 4 cultural linguistic groups - Amharic, Bengali, Tagalog and Tamil - living, working or volunteering in 3 downtown, high rise communities - St. James Town, Regent Park and Moss Park, were trained in identifying, preventing and responding to GBV and related topics including anti-oppression and anti-racism, LGBTQ+ inclusion and trans accountability, priority housing, safety planning, shelter access and programs, community resources, immigration law, abuse, trauma informed practice and arts based approaches to trauma.

## Programs | Immigrant and Refugee Women



Focus groups in each respective language were held by these newly trained leaders with their communities to share information and to collect data and messages for consciousness raising campaigns in the high rise buildings for Year 2.

Breaking isolation within and between newcomer, immigrant and refugee groups and among generations is a key feature of the IRWP's Beyond Borders project. We brought together community leaders from various backgrounds and ages who do not always work together. We used a number of youth facilitators and took risks by introducing LGBTQ+ material and facilitators with groups who traditionally have not been exposed to for this type of training or education. During the LGBTQ + inclusion/Trans Accountability workshop, one peer

leader mentioned that she had heard of the issues and terms that were discussed but that nobody had bothered to come and teach her what they meant and how her community could better support LGBTQ+ people.

***After attending the series of workshops another peer leader reflected that she had learned to identify, "...the flaws in our community which I thought were the norm. I came to realize we are not alone."***



# Programs | Immigrant and Refugee Women

**Another shared that,** “...we are from different cultures but face similar issues when it comes to violence. I am pleased to meet my fellow peer leaders who are passionate about changing lives and making a difference in the community.”



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The IRWP continued to organize forums with the Rights of Non Status Women's Network that were widely attended and reached numerous new workers in immigration, legal and GBV fields. Topics included critical analysis of conditional sponsorship and its effects on survivors of GBV, changes in refugee health access and legislation, vicarious trauma, and our first ever Self Care Fair. Attendees were exposed to a variety of techniques to help to address stress including belly dancing, aspects of holistic and Chinese medicine, social justice crafting and were led in a critical discussion on the idea of self-care in an increasingly harsh context for immigrants, refugees and those with precarious status.

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Finally, the IRWP coordinator was the featured speaker on a panel at the University of Windsor Law School and Masters of Social Work programs, International Women's Day celebrations to discuss our program and the effects of changes in immigration law on immigrant survivors of GBV.

# Programs | Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women

The past year has been a tremendously eventful and rewarding time for the Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women's Program.

In early Spring of 2014, Springtide partnered with Nellie's Women's Shelter to deliver an 8 – week psycho-educational support group for women with disabilities. This was the fourth time we ran the group. The workshop series explored a wide variety of topics related to violence prevention including: understanding the cycle of violence, identifying healthy and unhealthy relationships, learning about safety planning, resources in the community that support women who have experienced violence, and the importance of self-care. Women shared that this was an extremely important group for them. As a result of this positive experience some of the women are now accessing additional programs at Nellie's.

- **Building Bridges Across Barriers (BBAB)** had another successful year. This group of women from diverse backgrounds and social locations come together to raise awareness about violence prevention in their

communities, enhance their advocacy skills, and share strategies for becoming stronger allies for people in other marginalized communities. In January, the women attended a workshop that was delivered in partnership with the Centre for Independent Living, Toronto's Civic Literacy Project and Social Planning Toronto.

The workshop gave strategies and hands-on practice in delivering a deputation at the municipal level of government. In February, Deputy Mayor Pam McConnell came to a BBAB meeting to have a community consultation about ways to reduce poverty. Women shared their own lived experiences and ideas about priorities in the areas of employment, housing and social inclusion. In March, the BBAB committee continued their work on poverty and participated in TOPROSPERITY: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy Community Conversation. BBAB members ensured that the experiences of women with disabilities and Deaf women were part of the ongoing discussion at the city level. A report was given to the City with BBAB member's feedback

# Programs | Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women

about the priorities of women facing violence and abuse along with other forms of oppression. The Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women's Program continued work on the **Promoting the Reproductive Rights of Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women Project**.

In 2014-2015, Springtide Resources in partnership with the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto's Strength Based Parenting Initiative held 7 focus groups and completed 30 individual interviews with women that were on the continuum of exploring their reproductive and parenting rights.

We also held two focus groups for service providers and key stakeholders. The project goal was to collect and interpret data related to women's reproductive rights using a disability rights lens. Women with disabilities and Deaf women reported experiencing systemic barriers related to exercising all aspects of their reproductive rights. The project will finish in spring of 2015.

We also provided support, consultation and trainings throughout the year. ***We would like to thank our community partners, volunteers and staff for a great year of mutual support, learning and awareness raising!***

Also earlier this year, Springtide Resources published the Needs Assessment for the Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women's Program. This call to action was the result of a research project, conducted in 2014/15 by independent researcher, Margaret Hageman, to assess the current needs of the VAW community on disability inclusion from various stakeholder perspectives. **Invisible No More: Creating Inclusive Services Without Reinventing the Ramp** documents the stubborn and hidden barriers that prevent women with disabilities from accessing VAW services on a systematic and consistent basis.

Even with compliance to the AODA, VAW services must be supported to convene partnerships with disability organizations and women with disabilities to move toward inclusion. The Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women's Program is uniquely situated to provide leadership and facilitate these necessary partnerships. Click on the image below to access a summary of the report!

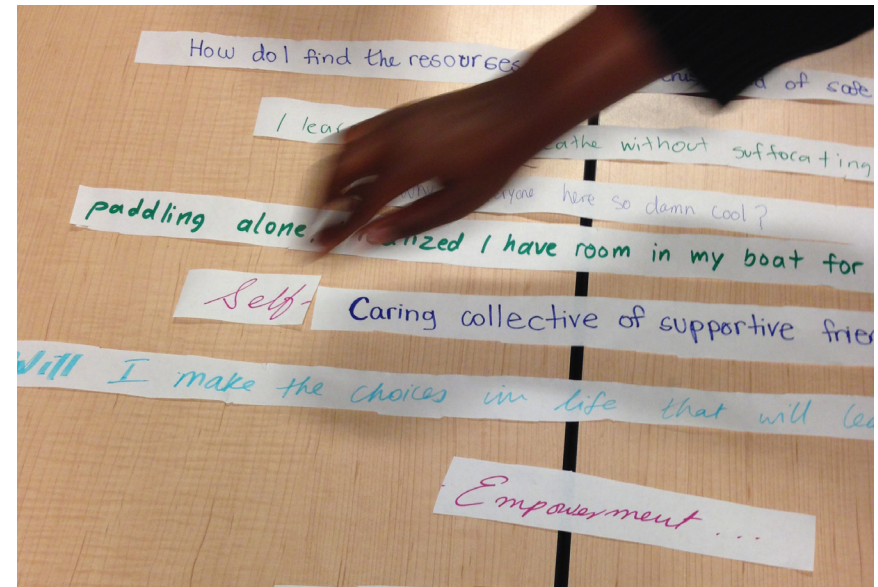


# Programs | Youth

Our Youth Program spent 2014-2015 expanding two of our existing projects as well as researching and exploring new partnerships and programming possibilities. We officially changed the name of the program from Young Women's Program to Youth Program to reflect the youth work we have been doing for years and the complexity of gender-based violence, particularly as experienced by LGBTQ+ spectrum youth.

The **myMSG** Peer Educators continued their work in schools and community groups last spring and summer. In evaluating the program we found that the Peer Educators wanted the opportunity to expand their skills and deepen their impact by doing a series of workshops with the same group of youth. This past fall we partnered with the Boys to Men and Young Women's groups (12-18 year olds) at Central Neighbourhood House to deliver six anti-oppression and healthy relationship workshops. It was a powerful learning experience for everyone.

Upon receiving funding from the Laidlaw Foundation to continue our **Family Matters Project**, we conducted a mini needs assessment to better understand the healthy relationship programming needs of LGBTQ+ spectrum youth. We interviewed



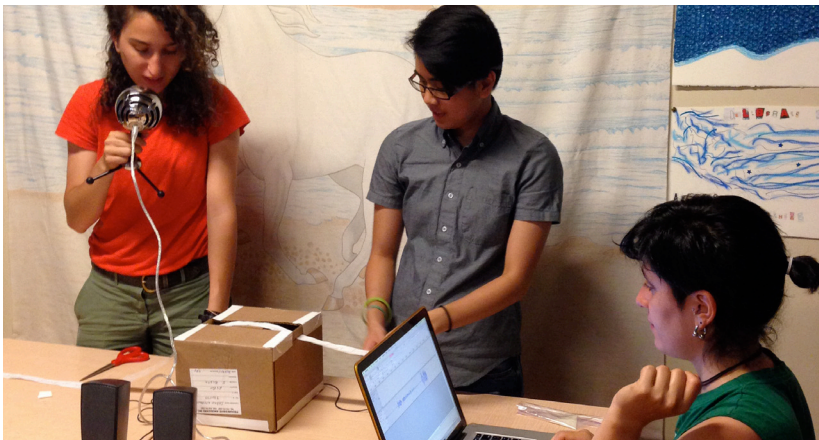
past and present program participants and volunteers, youth workers, and youth therapists and incorporated their feedback into programming design.

Springtide partnered with Roxanna Vahed of David Kelley LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS Counselling Services and community artist Reena Katz. The result was a healthy relationship workshop series that was trauma-informed and strength-based. We used discussion, mindfulness, and expressive-arts techniques to strengthen emotional and social skills such as communication, setting and respecting boundaries, intimacy, trust, and forgiveness.



***When asked to reflect on the biggest impact of participating in Family Matters, youth wrote:***

“This group helped me understand what care is. What it is to take care of yourself and others. What it looks like. What it feels like. That is something that I have never experienced anywhere else in my life, including in my own family. Now that I’ve had this experience I know it’s possible to feel that way with others and I can look forward to how I want to create that in my life.”



“Learning about trust and intimacy. Learning how to have positive communication in a relationship. Before this I had no idea how.

They don’t teach you that in school and then your parents tell you that the intimacy you want is wrong or you’ll go to hell and you don’t know what you want, what it’s okay to want, or how to break the cycles of negativity in your family. Now I have an idea where to start. Learning how to trust in the group meant that I’ve been able to try to build more relationships outside the group.

I’m more open. I reach out. And I take care of myself. I’ve got enough tools and skills and resources from you guys to know that I am going to be okay.”



# People | Volunteers & Board of Directors

## ***Volunteer Program***

This has been an incredible year for volunteer support! We would like to thank the following individuals for their invaluable contributions to Springtide:

Ashrafi Ahmed  
Rupa Amolik  
Fos Ashkir  
Christine Austin  
Rabab Awad  
Linda Baker  
Jacqueline Benn-John  
Victoria Bispham  
Afi Browne  
Tamyka Bullen  
Rubina Chowdhury  
Justin Cormie  
Halina Dekker  
Rachele Gottardi  
Reena Katz

Eliane Mazzawi  
Marilyn McLean  
Jasmine Ngan  
Nicka Noble  
Fran Odette  
Marilyn Oladimeji  
Nicole Pietsch  
Jessica Rong  
Shampa Saha  
Robin Simmons  
Melinda Suarez  
Gillian Sumi  
Olivia Verikaitis  
Niko Young

## ***Board of Directors***

Springtide's Board of Directors continues to provide us with support and leadership. As part of their work plan for 2014-15 the personnel and governance committees reviewed, updated and added to the agencies policies.

The Board welcomed Nicole Desgagnes, Constance Fourquet, Nadia Samji, Sheila Street, and Angela Mazza to Springtide. We said goodbye to Ellen Nichols, Tammy Maclean, Maya Jacob, and Josephine Ho and thank them for their time, expertise, and dedication.

## ***Board of Directors 2014-2015***

Maggie Panighel - **Chair**  
Vijaya Chikermane - **Secretary**  
Maya Jacob - **Vice-chair**  
AJ Pilobello - **Treasurer**  
Nicole Desgagnes  
Constance Fourquet

Josephine Ho  
Tammy Maclean  
Angela Mazza  
Ellen Nichols  
Nadia Samji  
Sheila Street

# People | Staff & Consultants

## ***Staff 2014-2015***

Ainsley Brittain – **Youth Program Coordinator, Volunteer Program Coordinator**  
Ruth Dworin – **Bookkeeper**  
Kaylen Fredrickson – **E-Learning Program Coordinator**  
Ashleigh Judge – **Program Support, Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women's Program**  
Erna Opena – **Office Administrator**  
Laarni Paras – **Communications and Outreach Coordinator (left September 2014)**  
Yoon Hee Park – **Network Administrator**  
Patty Porretta – **Fundraiser**  
Lynda Roy – **Women with Disabilities and Deaf Women's Program Manager**  
Marsha Sfeir – **Executive Director**  
Tanisha Sri Bhaggiyadatta – **Immigrant and Refugee Women's Program Coordinator**

## ***Consultants 2014-2015***

Azza Abbaro – **Illustrator and Graphic Designer**  
Jacqueline Benn-John – **E-Learning Content Developer**  
Catherine Butler – **Project Manager, Online Learning**  
Margaret Hageman – **Researcher, Evaluator**  
Esther Ignagni – **Women with Disabilities Program**  
Fran Odette – **Women with Disabilities Program**  
Paula Wansbrough – **E-Learning Instructional Designer**

## ***Government Supporters***

City of Toronto, Access and Equity  
City of Toronto, Community Services Grants Program  
Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation:  
Ontario Women's Directorate  
Ontario Trillium Foundation

## ***Organizational Supporters***

Corporation Sisters of Saint Martha  
Elementary Teachers' Federation Ontario (ETFO)  
Fondation Alex U. Soyka  
Generalate of Sisters of the Precious Blood  
J.P. Bickell Foundation  
Laidlaw Foundation  
Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association  
Sisters of Providence of Saint Vincent De Paul  
Sisters of St Joseph of Sault Ste Marie  
TD Securities Underwriting Hope TELUS  
United Way of Greater Toronto  
Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC)

## ***Organizational Members***

Assaulted Women's Helpline  
Bernadette McCann House for Women Inc.  
Chadwic Home Inc.  
Family Service Toronto  
Howe Sound Women's Centre Society  
Ingamo Family Homes Inc.  
Interval House of Hamilton – Wentworth  
Muskoka Women's Advocacy Group  
Nellie's (Women's Hostels Inc.)  
Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre  
People in Transition Inc.  
Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital  
Phoenix Place Stage 2  
Rainy River District, Women's Shelter of Hope  
Redwood Shelter  
Regent Park Community Health Centre  
St. Mary's General Hospital  
Times Change Women's Employment Service Inc.  
Women's Shelter of York

# People | Our funders 2014-15

## *Individual Supporters and Members*

Angie Arora  
Elizabeth Aszkanazy  
Barbara Nicole Balan  
H. Beth Balshaw  
Deborah Barndt  
Cindy Bettcher  
Sara Blake  
Suzanne Bond  
Paula Bourne  
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Janet and Michael Walker  
Paula Wansbrough  
Amanda Weingarten  
Susan Whelehan  
Marilyn Wilcoxen  
Joseph Wohlgeleinter  
Beverley Wybrow



After six years at Springtide, in September, we said goodbye to Laarni Paras, our Outreach, Communications and Volunteer Coordinator. Among her many roles while at Springtide, Laarni created and maintained our presence on Facebook and Twitter. We wish Laarni all the best as she continues in her position with Nielsen Consumer Insights.



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