

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### North York Women's Shelter Re-Launches Volunteer Program with Grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation

**Toronto, ON** – In June 2021, North York Women's Shelter (NYWS) received a \$130,000 Resilient Communities Fund grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) to create a Volunteer Program that reflects the needs of the community, employees, and volunteers, including safety, training, and resources. NYWS put a pause on its Volunteer program as the shelter was being rebuilt in 2017 but with the support of Ontario Trillium Foundation, NYWS is proud to announce the re-launch of its Volunteer program - newly designed to reflect its values as an organization and continued commitment to providing trauma-informed care in all programs at NYWS.

"In a time where structural factors and contexts such as COVID-19 pandemic have put even more survivors at risk, it's imperative to have everyone in the community involved in the mission of ending gender-based violence," said Vanessa Costa, Acting Executive Director of NYWS. "The support of Ontario Trillium Foundation has been invaluable for NYWS to build and implement a volunteer program to adapt to the challenges we have encountered as a shelter as well as a sector during these past two years. Having this framework to recruit and train volunteers will create impactful change to build our vision of building a community in which all survivors of gender-based violence are empowered and safe."

The Resilient Communities Fund grant program was developed by OTF to help non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. The Shelter's grant was used to hire a Volunteer Coordinator to review and design its self-sustaining volunteer program, creating a new volunteer framework, developing a new handbook provide training, and look at evaluation tools. The grant also helped with technical equipment costs, software licences and some program, administrative and staffing costs, With OTF's Resilient Communities Fund grant, NYWS can now provide its volunteers with anti-racist, anti-oppressive, trauma-informed training and instructions as well as the proper equipment, safety appliances, and supplies they will need.

North York Women's Shelter is an anti-violence centre committed to fighting gender-based violence and creating a world free of violence and characterised by gender equality. It provides emergency shelter, programming, counselling, and trauma-informed care to women, trans, and non-binary individuals who are fleeing violence, and their children. NYWS re-opened in 2020 with a new 24,000 square foot space that includes a 17 private bedroom emergency shelter and the Anne Marie D'Amico Community Collective with the capacity to house up to 40 women, trans, and non-binary individuals and their children. For more information, please visit the website at [www.nyws.ca](http://www.nyws.ca).

OTF is an agency of the Government of Ontario and one of Canada's leading granting foundations. Last year, nearly \$112M was invested into 1,384 community projects and partnerships to build healthy and vibrant communities and strengthen the impact of Ontario's non-profit sector. In 2020/21, OTF supported Ontario's economic recovery by helping non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Please visit: [otf.ca](http://otf.ca)

#### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

Esther Lee

Manager of Development and Communications

[esther@nyws.ca](mailto:esther@nyws.ca)

416 638 7335 X 110