



## YWCA ST. JOHN'S CELEBRATES ITS 90<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

**St. John's, August 10, 2015**— This summer, YWCA St. John's is celebrating a 90-year history of empowering women and girls in Newfoundland and Labrador with programming geared to their social, political, and professional development.

The organization first set up shop in St. John's in 1925, offering a housing service for women from outport communities looking for work in the city, as well as starting up the province's first summer camp for girls. Since then, program offerings have grown and adapted to keep up with the community's changing needs, while the organization continues its work in close affiliation with YWCA Canada and World YWCA with the shared goal of improving the lives of girls and women.

In addition to operating the summer camp and housing program in its early days, YWCA St. John's also started Newfoundland and Labrador's first employment service for women in 1944. This readiness to break new ground continued into the 1960s, when YWCA St. John's established the city's first daycare centre at the organization's Military Road location.

Having worked collaboratively for decades, the YWCA formally merged with the local YMCA in 1975. However, this partnership ended in 2012 at which time a dedicated group of women worked hard to revive the YWCA as an autonomous organization. One of these was former president of the board, Mary Andrews who said, "We cannot afford to lose the YWCA and that's why I've dedicated myself to fighting for its survival."

Thanks to such determination, YWCA St. John's has been revived and now delivers several key programs focused on engaging youth in violence prevention, and providing learning opportunities on healthy relationships, body image, and leadership. Among these are the Young Women's Leadership Program, Girlspace, and The Power of Being a Girl/Strength in Being a Boy conferences. "With this promotional campaign, we want to highlight the amazing work that women like Mary and other YWCA forebears have done over the past nine decades," said Executive Director Wendolyn Schlamp, "and we also want the community to know that we're rebuilding a vibrant organization and continuing to offer responsive and relevant programming."

In commemoration of their 90-year anniversary, YWCA St. John's has launched a social media campaign featuring snapshots from their archives including news clippings, letters and meeting minutes. A gathering of YWCA St. John's Alumnae this fall is also in the works.

For more information about YWCA St. John's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary and programs, visit [www.ywcastjohns.ca](http://www.ywcastjohns.ca) or contact [info@ywcastjohns.ca](mailto:info@ywcastjohns.ca).

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