



# Our Voices

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## Young Women in Leadership

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EVERY YEAR, YOUNG WOMEN COME to the Women's Resource Centre, drawn in by its pleasant and friendly atmosphere. They are motivated by their desire to enact positive change for equality and, in the process, they become significant leaders in their community. Komives, Lucas, & McMahon (1998, p.89) define leadership as "a relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good." The young women at the WRC are engaged in this type of leadership as they come together to explore issues of inequality and create innovative and empowering ways to address these issues.

At the WRC, we support young women as they take on these leadership roles by providing opportunities for them to

This is simply not enough given the amazing gender-focussed work that young women leaders at the WRC undertake.



They come together because of a shared concern about the lack of gender equality in society and on campus and with the inspired motivation to enact change. They work together in supportive and empowering ways and achieve transformative change that reaches out to others in the community. Thus, the leadership training needs to reflect these same principles.

What these young women leaders are engaged in is feminist transformative leadership, but outdated leadership models of the

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recognize their leadership potential and develop their awareness and knowledge of leadership. Under our Leadership Pillar, we run our Leadership for Women Workshop Series which provides young women leaders at the WRC with gender-sensitive leadership skills and knowledge to support them in their leadership activities. This emphasis on gender-sensitive leadership is crucial since many leadership workshops are either silent on the issue of gender or treat the matter as marginal, giving it a mere mention.

past and a general fear of feminism, fueled by media backlash, keeps many people from recognizing this kind of leadership. This is a problem for young women leaders because other leadership models are often based on gendered notions of behaviour that equate masculine qualities with leadership, such as being competitive, zero-sum and individual. However, as Kellerman and Rhode (2007, p. 465) indicate, women are placed in a double-bind. If they exhibit these characteristics, they are "demonized as bitchy, strident, and

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## MESSAGE FROM THE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

It is an exciting time at the Women's Resource Centre. We are now into our fourth year of operation, and with a new semester well under way, we are pleased to welcome a wonderful group of volunteers to our team. These young women and men are emerging leaders who are passionate about developing the vision of WRC programs and initiatives.

Leadership is at the heart of our work. We focus on honing the skills and potential of young women through mentorship and leadership training, workshops, activities and events.

This term, we welcomed the fourth group of Women Guiding Women mentors and protégées to our alumnae network which has now grown to include over 140 local female leaders. In October, we honour the achievements of a female student, alumna and WRC volunteer for their exemplary demonstration of wisdom, resilience and compassion, and this year, we are pleased to introduce a new volunteer program team driving our Leadership Pillar initiatives. We are also pleased to announce our first publication, the *Foundations of Women's Leadership Guidebook* (Women's Resource Centre, 2009), which explores what we envision as the building blocks to women's leadership development.

Young women are changing the face of leadership by employing feminist transformative models that focus on collaboration and sustainability. Their perspectives are reflective of a complex globalized society and these young women recognize how diversity is shaping our identities as individuals and communities. At the Women's Resource Centre, we see young women branching out to use online social networking, art, crafts, and unique spaces of dialogue to promote their multi-faceted perspectives on equality to diverse audiences. These young women leaders are shaping our academic institutions by what they are choosing to study, and how they are choosing to learn. They are transitioning into organizations where they are transforming how business is done in all sectors by speaking, acting, sharing and teaching differently. The face of the world's top organizational and political leaders will be different in a few years time. Social innovation will be driven by new forms of collaborative and transformative leadership, which these young women leaders are demonstrating. We are privileged to work with emerging leaders at the Women's Resource Centre.

*Stephanie Garrett*  
Stephanie Garrett  
Executive Director

insensitive" but if they, for example, seek consensus with the group, they are "discounted as weak, passive, and too nice." The gendered nature of these leadership models can thus act as an obstacle to women's leadership as, in both cases, a woman is considered incapable of being a leader.

By gaining an awareness of these challenges and by reclaiming feminist transformative leadership, young women can better overcome gendered notions of leadership that are less inclusive, and are more equipped to promote a leadership model that is reflective of how they are currently engaging.



*WRC Volunteers at Volunteer Training*

Equipped with the knowledge of feminist transformative leadership and the development of their leadership skills, these young women will be capable of taking the transformative work they are already doing and make it go even further. Since their work is centered around values of equality, inclusiveness, and empowerment, they have the ability to bring positive, socially just change to all people. These are the young women leaders of today who are shaping leadership in a way that has the potential to spread and make all people partners of positive societal transformation.

#### References:

- Kellerman, B., & Rhode, D. L. (2007) *Women and Leadership: The State of Play and Strategies for Change*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Komives, S.R., Lucas, N., & McMahon, T.R. (1998) *Exploring Leadership: For College Students Who Want to Make a Difference*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

# WRC Awards

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S WISDOM, RESILIENCE AND COMPASSION

## Distinguished Alumna

### CAROL OLIVER

OVER THE SPAN OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, Carol Oliver has provided leadership in women's issues, gender equality, community building and organizational change and development. The completion of a graduate degree in Communication Studies (MSC, 1994) at the University of Calgary, was an important achievement and one that she draws upon in so many ways.



Taking on the role of Executive Director for the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter (1983-1990) at 28 years of age was both daunting and exhilarating for Carol. The emergence of women's shelters coupled with a growing body of research on violence against women characterized this time. Carol strived for grace during the difficult times and celebrated the many successes along the way, in particular, the building of a new emergency shelter. Her work in the "field" proved excellent preparation for her future role at the United Way

of Calgary and Area where Carol's interests in social policy, social change and community development aligned. In this context, she learned the importance of bold and strategic leadership. In her current position as Executive Director of the Distress Centre Calgary, Carol gets the chance to integrate so many lessons and learnings. She considers this time a real gift.

In 2004, Carol began serving on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Women's Foundation. Her decision to do so has been deeply rewarding. CWF is Canada's only public foundation dedicated solely to improving and changing the lives of women and girls.

In her various roles, Carol has met compassionate front-line workers, volunteers, donors, policy makers, and researchers. In her experience, the most compassionate souls are those that work with the most vulnerable, in the most challenging of conditions and environments.

Carol and her life partner have two children, now 18 and 16 years of age, who she considers to be her greatest teachers.

## Distinguished Student

### ADINA EDWARDS

ADINA EDWARDS RETURNED TO COLLEGE at the age of twenty-six and completed a Bachelors degree in Visual Arts at the Emily Carr Institute in Vancouver, B.C. During her undergraduate studies she was awarded numerous scholarships, graduated with honours, and worked part-time at homeless shelters and with youth in foster care. After working full-time for four years as a supervisor at a transitional housing project for women actively using drugs and working in the sex-trade industry, Adina decided to return to her studies to complete a Master's degree in Fine Arts at the University of Calgary. She was awarded the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant in 2008 for her art which addresses social justice and health concerns for women.

In her personal life, Adina has overcome the barrier of only completing grade seven before going to university as an adult.

She has also struggled with growing up in the poorest region in Canada and suffered from marginalization due to poverty, drug misuse and sexual exploitation as a youth.

Adina has remained committed to the work she does with sexually exploited women in the downtown eastside of Vancouver, B.C. and has also just completed a year of work with the city of Calgary creating arts initiatives for the homeless population. Her commitment to social justice concerns for women in survival sex-trade is evident not only in the art she creates but in the many active projects she remains dedicated to.



The WRC Awards 2009 Presentation Ceremony was held on October 23 at the North Courtyard, MacEwan Student Centre, UofC. The ceremony is supported by the University of Calgary Alumni Association and the Student's Union.



## THE SHEILA O'BRIEN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP 2009

### Vicky Mah

VICKY MAH completed her B.Sc. (Hons) degree at the UofC in 2004, and then went on to pursue graduate studies in the Department of Chemistry. She recently completed the requirements for a Ph.D. in Inorganic Chemistry, and will receive her degree at the November convocation ceremony. Vicky has been an active member of the chemistry research community: she frequently presented her work at national and international conferences, published a number of peer-reviewed journal articles, and received several competitive graduate research awards during her studies.

Vicky joined the Women's Resource Centre as a volunteer in September 2007, and worked actively with the Peer Support and Diversity programs. As a peer supporter she strove to make the WRC a warm and welcoming place for newcomers, to listen and share with those around her, and to provide needed resources to students and staff. As a member of the Diversity team, Vicky worked on projects to promote and celebrate diversity, including a poster campaign honouring the achievements of black Canadian women, and the "Drums for Diversity Voices for Change" event to commemorate March 21, International Day for the Elimination of Racism. As a part of the WRC's goals of

connecting women through sharing and learning, she was involved in planning volunteer recognition events and organizing craft activities.

Vicky is passionate about learning more about the vast field of science. She feels strongly about helping marginalized people, which motivated her to volunteer at the WRC. In the future she hopes to continue to expand her knowledge and contribution to both these areas. Vicky Mah was selected by her WRC volunteer peers to be recognized for her outstanding contributions to the WRC. For more information on the award, please visit:

[http://www.ucalgary.ca/women/volunteer\\_award](http://www.ucalgary.ca/women/volunteer_award).



#### I support the Women's Resource Centre.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like to volunteer.
- I would like to be notified of events & information.
- I would like to have a copy of the WRC newsletter.
- I would like to donate to the WRC

There are several ways to donate to the Women's Resource Centre including online donations by credit card. We also accept donations by cash, cheques, and new books for our growing Women's Resource Library. A tax creditable receipt is provided with each monetary donation.

#### Enclosed is my donation of:

\$50     \$75     \$100     \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Send donations to:

Women's Resource Centre, MH318, 2500 University Drive  
NW, Calgary, Alberta, T2N 1N4

Online Donation: [www.ucalgary.ca/giving](http://www.ucalgary.ca/giving)

### How can you support the WRC?

#### BY VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the WRC. All of our programs are led by volunteers representing different sectors of the community campus including students, staff, faculty and members of the Calgary community. The WRC team works to facilitate the projects, ideas and creative initiatives of our volunteers and the centre is defined by and for the women who volunteer with us and enjoy our space. Volunteering is an excellent way to take advantage of our beautiful space, interact with women from diverse backgrounds, and learn through dialogue and research.

#### THROUGH SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship is an excellent way to see tangible growth and success at the WRC. Our yearly outcome-based assessments include important consultations with the users of the centre as well as key community stakeholders. When you support our centre you will receive a yearly package highlighting our activities, challenges and successes as well as newsletters describing upcoming events and including feature articles.

**GET INVOLVED!** If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, mentor or a sponsor, drop by our centre, visit our website at [www.ucalgary.ca/women](http://www.ucalgary.ca/women), call us at 403-220-8551 or email us at [women@ucalgary.ca](mailto:women@ucalgary.ca)

