

CHANGEMAKER

December 2021



Dear Friend,

Have you ever felt relief and anxiety all at once?

That's how I felt when headlines first emerged about how the [Signal for Help](#) was used by a teenage girl in a kidnapping situation last month. I feel huge relief that she got to safety.

But I feel a fresh sense of urgency too: how many others in abusive situations are struggling right now? How many other violent situations behind closed doors will never make the news?

In the wake of that story, my colleagues and I spoke with reporters from all over the globe including NBC, BBC, and The New York Times, to explain why we launched the Signal and what it means to answer the signs and signals of gender-based violence.

While all this coverage raises critical awareness of how someone experiencing violence can use the Signal, it's equally critical that ALL OF US know how to respond.

And we've got some serious work to do. Our recent poll found that [about two-thirds of people in Canada know a woman who has experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse](#), but only 1 in 6 are very confident they would know what to say or do to offer support to someone facing emotional or sexual abuse. It's only 1 in 5 for physical abuse.

This gap between awareness of the problem and confidence to act is one reason we have launched the [Signal For Help Responder campaign](#). It couldn't

come at a better time: gender-based violence risks have increased in the pandemic, femicides are on an upward trend, and the holidays can be an especially difficult time for those in abusive homes.

Along with building a community of Signal for Help Responders, we all need to make sure that gender-based violence support services can do their critical work to prevent and end abuse. They are the frontline support for abuse survivors trying to rebuild their lives. [I urge you to support our violence prevention fundraising efforts](#). These vital services, including women's shelters and sexual assault services, play a key role in supporting survivors all over Canada to get the immediate and long-term help they need.

This holiday season, we need to raise \$500,000 to fund violence prevention services. I am so grateful to be part of a special community of people who believe that violence IS preventable, cycles ARE breakable, and lives CAN be rebuilt.

I thank you for giving generously and I wish you and yours a happy and healthy holiday season.



Paulette Senior
President and CEO
Canadian Women's Foundation

Learn how to respond to the Signal for Help



Visit: signalresponder.ca

Be a Signal for Help Responder

Visit SignalResponder.ca to get the Signal for Help Responder's Action Guide and sign up for more tools and training.

And please share the campaign with your networks so we can build a nationwide community of Signal Responders. We need to shift our culture of stigma around gender-based violence to a culture of support.

The [Signal for Help](#) is a simple one-handed gesture you can make to show you need help and want someone to check in with you safely. But for the Signal to help as many people as possible, we all need to know how to respond to it. That's why we launched the [Signal for Help Responder](#) campaign on November 25, which also kicked off the International 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence.

When you sign up to become a [Signal for Help Responder](#), you can download an action guide, which helps loved ones, friends, coworkers and neighbours recognize abuse, and respond with supportive, non-judgmental conversations.

The Canadian Women's Foundation acknowledges the support of Women and Gender Equality Canada.

Watch our [campaign launch video](#), featuring the Honorable Minister Marci Ien and our President and CEO, Paulette Senior.



Women and Gender Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada



Thank you for Showing Girls and Young People You've Got their Backs!

Together with partners Giant Tiger and Shoppers Drug Mart, you raised more than \$500,000 for Girls' Fund and Teen Healthy Relationship programs all over the country. These programs provide diverse girls and young people safe spaces where they can build confidence, healthy relationships, and a sense of belonging – all of which are key to safety and well-being.

Over the last year and a half, many girls and young people have felt alone in their struggles with mental health, healthy relationships, identity, belonging, and confidence. As they headed into

another school year of pandemic uncertainty, we asked you to let them know "We've Got Your Back". And you came through in a big way.



Watch the video to learn more about your impact!

**VIDEO LINK:
Your Impact: "Got Your Back"**

In Tribute: Founding Mother Susan Woods

We are indebted to the eight trailblazing women who envisioned and launched the Canadian Women's Foundation in 1991 to build a gender-equal Canada. Sadly, one of our Founding Mothers, Susan Woods, passed away on October 21, 2021.

The Foundation was born out of a conversation between Susan and her friend, Nancy Ruth. One day, they pulled out lawn chairs and started discussing the possibilities. Susan became the Foundation's first staff member and helped guide early planning.

She was also known for her volunteer work with the YWCA Toronto, Fred Victor Mission, and St.



Christopher House (now West Neighbourhood House). "I knew Susan for more than 40 years," says Beverley Wybrow, the Foundation's first President and CEO. "She was a smart, passionate, committed feminist and a wonderful friend."



Congratulations on Nova Scotia's Highest Honour

Congratulations to Shawna Paris-Hoyte, former Foundation board member, who has been appointed to the Order of Nova Scotia.

The Order recognized Shawna for her "outstanding achievement and leadership as a lawyer, social worker, educator, and social justice advocate." She is also described as a "zealous advocate for the human rights of women, children, youth, families and the Black community."



Holiday Gifting Opportunity: Ricki's



For holiday gifts that support social change, check out our [Shop With Purpose](#) page, which features products whose proceeds go toward the critical work of the Canadian Women's Foundation.

Ricki's is offering limited-edition [gift boxes](#) in stores this season, with proceeds benefiting the Foundation. Ricki's is a longstanding partner in our efforts to build women's economic security all over the country:

“Over our 15-year partnership with the Foundation, Ricki's has helped raise close to \$2 million to help women help themselves out of poverty and into a better life. It's life-changing work. And, as a company run largely by women, for women, our partnership with the Foundation has changed our lives too. We can't wait to see what we can continue to accomplish together.”

- RICKI'S



Donor Spotlight: Margaret Newall

Margaret Newall didn't become aware of the term "violence against women" until December 6, 1989, when she was visiting her daughter in Montreal. "We heard about something going on at l'École Polytechnique. Opening the door, we could hear the sirens going by on their way to deal with the emergency. A gunman had entered a classroom, separated the women from the men, and shot 14 women. That was another wake-up call for me. It was a wake-up call for Canada, too."

Margaret started raising money for the Prairie Centre, which was doing research on the causes of violence, when she heard about the Canadian Women's Foundation. "I found out about the support they gave to women's shelters and to programs that taught women the skills they needed to be financially independent."

She has remained a steadfast and generous supporter of the Foundation since 2004. "One of my favourite things about the Foundation is their program for teenagers to help them learn what healthy relationships look like, where the partners respect each other, and neither needs to control the other," Margaret says.

"To build a future where children, women, and men can feel safe in their homes with their families: that is a worthy goal. That's why I support the Canadian Women's Foundation."

Grantee Spotlight: “She helped me re-write my story”

Thanks to your support, programs throughout Canada are enabled to help women and gender-diverse people rebuild their lives after violence. Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, these critical services continue to transform lives. Here are just a few testimonials.

“I had a lot of trauma in childhood and as an adult and I thought I would be messed up forever. I am so happy that I tried counselling. It helped me understand that I didn't deserve the thing that had happened to me and that I was strong enough to take my life back. My counsellor believed that I could change and taught me ways to work through my emotions. She helped me rewrite my life story.”

- **PARTICIPANT**, Specialized Sexual Violence Program, Dragonfly Counselling and Support Centre, Bonnyville, Alberta.

This program offers culturally-safe intervention, counselling, and support to those who've been impacted directly or indirectly by sexual violence.

“One of our single moms worked through very challenging historical trauma, as well as fighting the cycle of poverty. Living in low-income housing, and finding herself stuck in a life of income support, she is now living in market housing, and has been in a position for several months.[...] She has seen raises and promotions. She [...] has now volunteered with our agency as she feels the need to give back and support others facing the same situation she had.”

- **STAFF MEMBER**, *The Way Out* Work Therapy Program for Survivors of Trauma and/or Abuse, delivered by Castlegar and District Community Services, in Castlegar, BC.



This work-reintegration program helps participants develop strategies for adapting to new work placements, building on their strengths in a therapeutic environment.

“On top of helping to give me a break from pandemic isolation, the art therapy program at La Maison Marguerite coached me on how to express difficult experiences, emotions and feelings in a safe environment.”

- **PARTICIPANT**, *The Art of Rebuilding One's Life* program, delivered by La Maison Marguerite shelter in Montreal, Quebec.

This art therapy program provides clients with creative tools to deal with the violence they've experienced, and helps empower them to reclaim their place in society.

Granting Updates



Shockproofing Communities

These grants, supported by the Government of Canada's department of Women and Gender Equality, aim to help gender-justice-seeking organizations better prepare for future crises, including pandemics. The Foundation will be granting the first round of Shockproofing Communities funding to 400+ organizations in December 2021 and expects to provide more funding opportunities in the winter of 2022.



Community Needs Grants

These grants provide one year of flexible funding to organizations to help them address the new pressures of the pandemic. We have evaluated applications and will be providing 24 Community Needs Grants to organizations throughout Canada in mid-December 2021. We'll invite a new round of Community Needs Grants in February 2022.



Emerging and Urgent Issues Grants

These grants support Emerging and Urgent Issues related to gender equality. Emerging issues may arise through research projects, community convening, expertise of women affected by the issue, and policy analysis. Funds support early work to explore the issue and how it manifests. Urgent issues require a quick response to events such as an unexpected cut to crucial program funding or a fast-onset community emergency. A small number of grants are provided and, thanks to partnership with Women and Gender Equality Canada, we offer specific grants for Rural, Remote and Northern Communities. Seven grants have been provided since June 2021.



Economic Development Grants

These multi-year grants support programs offering self employment and business acceleration training, skills building and support in trades and technology and access to meaningful employment for women and gender diverse people. We'll be launching our next 4-year cycle of these grants in March 2022.



Image: Meta4films Inc.

Policy Insights and Learnings

Pandemic Lessons Learned: We Need to “Shockproof” our Communities

Gender-based violence tends to spike in times of crisis and disaster—but violence is not inevitable. What do we have to do to make sure the spike in risk of violence we’ve experienced in the COVID-19 crisis never happens in Canada again? This is the question we’re raising in a series of articles in [The Toronto Star](#) coming out December 8. The series calls attention to the work that’s needed, on both the personal and political level, to “shockproof” our communities against spikes in gender-based violence during times of crisis.

Solidarity with Afghan Women

In Afghanistan, the recent return to power of the Taliban has threatened important progress toward gender equality. This affects the goal of gender justice across the world. We are working alongside advocates and organizations to amplify Afghan women’s voices and support stronger policy-making and service provision to address the rising needs. We also signed onto the Canadian Campaign for Afghan Peace, an open letter to the government to urge immediate action.

Inaugural Day of Truth and Reconciliation

On the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, we undertook a day of learning on issues of colonialism, anti-Indigenous racism, and their interconnections with gender justice. We reflected on the relationships, partnerships, learnings, and actions we need to better pursue truth, reconciliation, and decolonization.

Here are some of the helpful [learning resources](#) we accessed.

Learn More:

[Op/Ed: How do we Address the Crisis in Afghanistan? Bolster Feminist Movements, by Mariam Safi and Paulette Senior, iPolitics](#)

Panel Discussion:

[Solidarity With Afghan Women: A Policy Perspective](#)

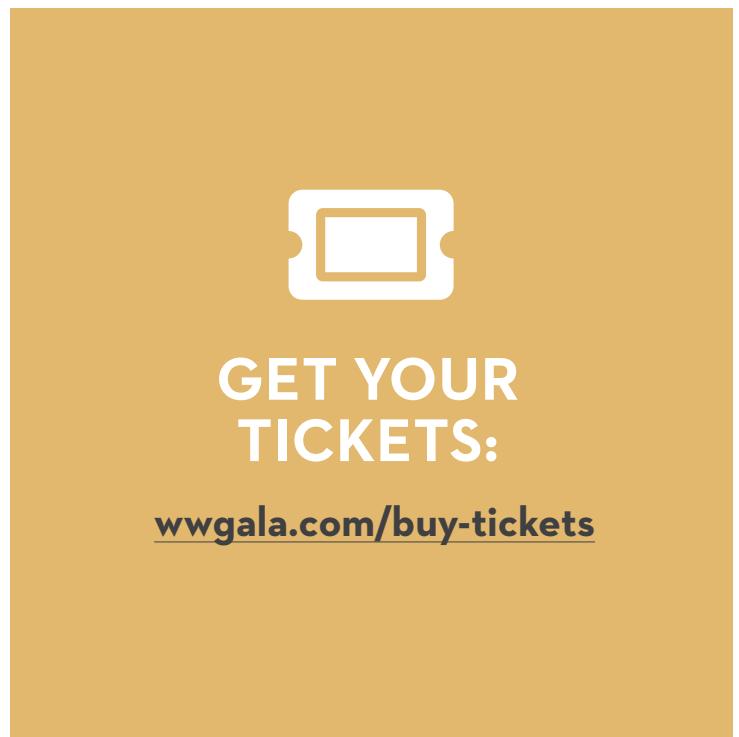
Service Provider Roundtable:

[Supporting Afghan Women](#)

Get Your Tickets for the Women + Wealth International Women's Day Gala 2022

You won't want to miss the amazing keynote speakers at next year's International Women's Day Women + Wealth Galas, which raise funds to benefit the Foundation. The events, being held in Calgary and Edmonton, will feature Schitt's Creek star Catherine O'Hara and Canada's Drag Race winner Queen Priyanka, along with emcee Carrie Doll. The speakers will share their journeys to success, aiming to inspire those on their way to becoming passionate leaders in businesses, organizations, governments, schools and communities. Guests will enjoy a three-course meal, gift bag, and access to the event reception.

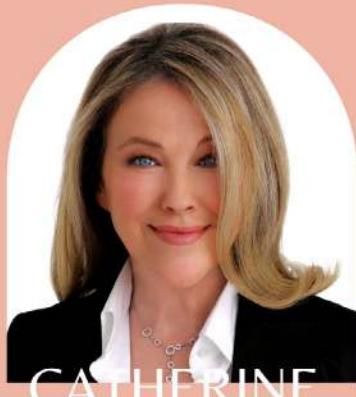
Next year's events are being held in Edmonton on March 4 and in Calgary on March 5, 2022.



*Women
+ Wealth
GALA*



CARRIE DOLL



CATHERINE O'HARA



QUEEN PRIYANKA

MARCH 4, 2022: EDMONTON CONVENTION CENTRE
MARCH 5, 2022: CALGARY TELUS CONVENTION CENTRE

Get Into the Know ... Subscribe to Our Podcast

canadianwomen.org/podcast

Tune into our latest **Alright, Now What?** podcast episode “The Signal for Help is Only as Good as its Response”, which speaks to what support can look like and addresses those times in the past when we didn’t know how to respond to signals of abuse. It’s the first in a series of podcast discussions that will focus on why it’s so critical to become a Signal for Help Responder.

ALRIGHT, NOW WHAT?



Watch Now: Canada-Wide Digital Town Hall

If you missed our September 16 Town Hall, [watch the video](#) now. Learn about the impact of your support and meet some of our grantee partners.

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