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Leadership Team President's Message

As the air turns crisp and the leaves paint the world in shades of gold and crimson, fall reminds us that change can be beautiful. Nights become longer, days shorter, and many of us have the urge to cocoon. Its a season that invites reflection, gratitude and community.

Gratitude: I am so grateful for our CFUW Brantford community. I have found so many friends and made so many meaningful connections. I love the way we come together to support each other, support our community, and support our club.

Community: Not only are we, as members of CFUW Brantford a community, we also support our larger community, both collectively and individually. Currently we are collecting for Nova Vita's Hope for the Holidays drive. This is an organization we have supported consistently since I became a member (and well before). Individually many of the members support a variety of organizations, both through their time and money locally, nationally, and internationally.

So, as we head into November let us all take a moment to engage in reflection, gratitude and community.

Respectively submitted ,
Betsy Capitano, President of the Month of October



October General Meeting

Our October General Meeting provided enjoyable social activity at the beginning of the meeting, a stimulating introduction to the history and impact of women in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police by Paulette Breau, a 30 year veteran of the force. A productive business meeting followed the presentation.



Allocation of International Funds



This year the Advocacy Committee is presenting to the membership four international organizations, as submitted by the membership, to share equally, in the \$1592.48 allocated for international organizations which support girls and women.

CHES as submitted by Barbara Melara:

CHES was established in Kenya 40 years ago and since 2000 has worked exclusively with girls. CHES provides scholarships to girls based on intelligence, as determined by the National Exam taken at the end of Primary School., and need as determined by interviews and home visits. The girls selected have no other way to attend Secondary School.

CHES is a Canadian Registered Charitable Organization without affiliation to government or religious organizations. 100% of donated monies are sent to Africa for direct educational costs. Administrative costs are raised by special fundraising in Canada.

As is so often the case, I feel I benefit tremendously by my involvement with CHES. Afterwards visiting Kenya 4 times, I have been able to see first hand how CHES has impacted the lives of countless girls and their families. This year there are 248 girls attending secondary school. There are teachers, doctors and accountants who have graduated from university because of their start with CHES.

Canadian Nurses for Africa submitted by Colette Wilson:

Canadian Nurses for Africa is a volunteer-led charity founded in 2007 by Gail Wolters, a former member of CFUW Brantford. It operates in rural Kenya, Africa. Nurses from Canada, along with other selected volunteers, provide both short-term medical treatment as well as year-round preventative care, treatment and healthcare education to people in rural communities in Kenya who have difficulty accessing healthcare. The Canadian volunteers pay their own expenses. All funds raised go directly to the cost of providing treatment, long-term preventative medicine, transportation of patients, etc. Currently, Canadian nurses and their Kenyan partners treat between 500 – 700 patients **daily** during their two-week clinics in the field. CNFA pays for all hospital fees and surgeries..~

CNFA nurses with expertise in maternal-child nursing, involve and mentor Kenyan nurse-midwives who, in turn, liaise with the Canadian nurses explaining key points and clarifying cross-cultural concepts. The goal of CNFA is that, in time, the program will be run completely by Kenyan healthcare workers.

CNFA provides on-going maternal and newborn health education for nearly 250 grassroots community health providers (CHPs) in remote villages. The programs teach the danger signs in pregnancy and postpartum, healthy newborn and infant development, infant feeding, and when to refer mothers and babies for further care.

Field work includes sexual health information and distribution of re-usable sanitary pads.

CNFA covers the cost of university tuition and housing for an eligible Kenyan nursing student for the entire duration of her course.

Motorcycle Ambulances is a new program whereby CFNA sponsors especially equipped motorcycle transport for pregnant women from remote villages who require urgent care at the nearest health facility. The motorcycle squad are known as "Rescue Rangers".

The Wellspring Foundation for Education submitted by Linda Tripp:

Wellspring's team of African educators work in local schools and communities, delivering grassroots education training and mentoring for school leaders, teachers, parents and community leaders to support children's holistic development and learning.

Thirty-one years after the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi, regional tensions and intergenerational trauma are still very present. Wellspring provides leadership to support girls' mental health and resilience, ensuring their education includes social-emotional learning and support for family health and healing. Girls in Rwanda face numerous challenges that affect their physical, mental and emotional health and their educational achievement. They battle family breakdown, early marriage, teen pregnancy, gender-based violence, parent neglect, poverty, and pressures to financially and practically support family survival.

Wellspring's Youth First program trains girls about sexual reproductive health, children's rights, gender-based violence, sexual harassment and self-advocacy to help girls develop the confidence and resilience they need to learn and thrive. The schools are under-resourced and can not provide the workbooks and materials needed to help learning. Funds from CFUW Brantford could make a difference in being able to provide these tools for learning.

Story of Impact: Evaline Resists Sexual Violence

Eveline, age 15, experienced sexual abuse at the hands of a neighbour who had offered to buy her school supplies, but privately demanded more in exchange for his kindness. He threatened her if she ever told anyone. She participated in Wellspring's Youth First club. When she learned about children's rights and sexual harassment, she made a brave decision to tell her teacher what was happening. Together, they worked with community leaders and Evaline's mom to confront the abuser and end the harm.



Story of Impact #2: Lydia Believes in Her True Potential

Lydia grew up believing her education didn't matter, and as a girl she was not capable. She grew up watching her mother be subjected to intimate partner violence. Through Wellspring's Youth First Rwanda program Lydia learned about self-worth, goal setting, emotional regulation, and positive relationships. Her teacher started making intentional efforts to build up each student, including Lydia. With every class, she worked to create an environment where students were encouraged to speak up, share, and believe in themselves. And slowly, something began to shift in Lydia. With her teacher's support, Lydia developed a desire for education and a growing belief in her own future. Today, Lydia dreams of becoming a police officer. Her goal isn't about authority—it's about protection. She wants to make sure others are safe. She wants to be a voice for people who feel unheard, especially those, like her mother, who have experienced violence or hardship at home.

CUSO international as submitted by Beverly Golden:

I served as a Volunteer for a 2 year term at the MacRobert Hospital, Dhariwal, Punjab, India.

On my return, knowing what important work was being accomplished by volunteers around the world, I began a monthly donation, which continues to this day.

CUSO demonstrates a meaningful commitment to gender equity and can designate donated funds to projects for women and girls..

The CUSO September pamphlet "IMPACT" contains stories of growth and here are two of them:

- 1.Ethiopia – Soloman, aged 17, has enrolled in CUSO's Positive Masculinity Training, a program attended by both boys and girls, because he sees the need for gender equity to become the norm, and .
- 2.Cameroon – Tatiane joined CUSO's Tech Women Factory program, developing skills in digital art, video editing and Photoshop. She dreams of shooting a film with a team made up entirely of women .

Nova Vita's Hope For The Holidays: Thanks to all the members who have participated in the Hope for the Holidays campaign, the goal of which is to help fill the tremendous need for women and girls' hygiene items, including pyjamas and slippers. It is not too late to add donations. A drop-off basket will be available at the November 26, 2025 General Meeting. Please give money donations to Teddy as either cash or cheques made out to "Nova Vita". Receipts will be provided by Nova Vita. If you are unable to attend the November meeting, and wish to donate an item or cash/cheque, please let Teddy know at 519-717-6675 or teddybuzek@gmail.com. Someone from the Advocacy Committee will arrange to pick up your donation. Our "drop-off" appointment is on Saturday, December 6, 2025.



"Significant Lives": The eight books that were recently found, safely stored in the CFUW boxes at the museum, have quickly sold. \$400.00 has now been added to our Scholarship Fund. It should be noted that we have kept one book for the archives and one book to be used for display purposes at special events.

The Advocacy Committee: Teddy B., Betsy C., Carol K.

NEWS NEWS NEWS

EXCITING NEW EVENT



CFUW BRANTFORD AFTERNOON TEA FUNDRAISER

DATE: October 25, 2026

LOCATION: Sacred Heart Parish Centre, Paris, Ontario

CATERER: High Tea by Devlin's Country Bistro

SAVE THE DATE

More information to follow

Co-Chairs: Teddy Buzek and Arlene Cass



2025 CFUW Award B

CFUW Brantford is awarding two B scholarships this fall. Our recipients are: **Madeline Tobin and Marissa Papp.**

Madeline graduated from Lakehead University in 2017 and is presently working at the Brant Community Healthcare System as a Nurse Navigator in the Emergency Department. In this role she supports individuals with complex needs to thrive in the community by connecting them with essential medical, social, and housing resources. Many of these individuals face significant challenges with substance use, mental health issues, poverty, and homelessness. Madeline is enrolled in the Master of Science – Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner at McMaster University, while still working. She hopes to make a lasting contribution to healthcare by ensuring that every person, regardless of circumstance, receives the quality care they deserve.

Marissa has had many struggles through childhood and left high school before graduating. Now in her early twenties with great determination and support, she has turned her life in a positive direction. Marissa completed her high school credits recently at GELA. From a young age when she volunteered at the John Nolbe Home she has wanted to become a PSW. Marissa is now enrolled at Anderson College and looks forward to gaining experience as a PSW. Her long term goal is to get her RN degree and specialize in mental health for young adolescents.

Karen I.

CFUW Interest Groups 2025 – 2026 Brief Overview

Interest Groups continue as an important part of belonging to CFUW with many members belonging to more than one group. It is a wonderful way to socialize and get to know other members of the club. All groups welcome new members starting at any time during the year, though a few are full at this point.

Biking Group weekly from May until October, meeting for a ride around the Grand River Loop or on various trails in and around Brantford including nearby communities. Rides are approximately 20 km, at a senior pace, with **flexible dates and times**.

There are **three book groups**:

Monday Afternoon Group, 2nd Monday, a 1p.m. lunch at Symposium Café. Group discusses various books that they have read in the past month.

Monday Evening Group, 3rd Monday at 7 p.m.

Thursday Evening Group, 1st Thursday at 7 p.m. (only 2 spots available)

Both evening groups meet at a member's home, discussing one book from a predetermined list previously decided at a yearly planning meeting. Discussions are lively and very often veer off the actual book topic.

Bridge Group, 1st Monday at 1 p.m. The group meets in members' homes most months though online in December, January and February. Host may sometimes opt to meet in the evening. If the first Monday of the month is a holiday, the group decides whether to meet or move to the following Monday.

Creative Cooking Group, 3rd Wednesday at 6 p.m. Group meets in members' homes. These monthly dinners are scheduled ahead of time for the season. In December the group has sometimes celebrated with a Christmas lunch at the Brantford Golf & Country Club.

Daytrippers, random times and locations. Individuals in this collaborative group put forth ideas and organize (where possible) their suggested activity. Past activities included a tour of the Toyota plant, a historical tour of The Superior Court Building, followed by wine and beverages at The Brantford Club and a show at the Sanderson Centre. Often the activity is limited in numbers so it is a first come, first serve basis.

Dining Out Group, random lunch or dinner dates at various times and locations. The group enjoys jaunts out of town during the good weather, staying closer to town during the winter months. Some places visited in the past include dinner at The Twisted Lemon in Cayuga, lunch at the Lake House in Vineland, Sunday Brunch at the Ancaster Mill and lunch at the Olde School. Dates and times of day vary to ensure all the members can join in at least some of the time. On average 12 – 16 members take part, gratefully enjoy stimulating conversation and delicious meals.

Food with Thought Group, 2nd Thursday at 6 p.m. (presently full so would be put on a wait list.)

Group meets in various members' homes for pot luck dinners and conversation, both serious and entertaining. A topic is not set prior to the meal as current events, individual commentary, or some humorous event "pepper" the evening and results in serious reflection or hilarious story telling.

Games Group, 2nd Thursday and 4th Monday at 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. at the United Way offices on Morrell St. playing both new and old games. The group with average attendance of 5 – 8 of the 14 members smile, laugh and have fun during friendly competition in assorted games. One of the current favourites is Farkle.

Mahjongg, 1st and 3rd Friday of every month from 1-3 p.m. (presently full so would be put on a wait list.)

Group meets to play North American MahJongg, receiving instruction, coaching and just having fun while learning to play the game.

Memoir Writing, 2nd and 4th Friday from 1-3 pm and often longer til 4 pm.

Due to the nature of this group, it is part of the process at times to discuss deeply personal issues. Discussion can only be done in an atmosphere of trust. This trust and feeling that you will not be judged for what you write, is critical to the ultimate success of the group or not. As such, it is critical that prospective new members realize that this is not a casual, drop-in as you like, and find convenient, type of group. If someone wants to join, we will welcome them with open arms. They do need to know in advance, however, to attend this group regularly and commit to the process in advance.

Walking Group Tuesday, 9:30 all year round, at various trails in good weather or the Gretzky Centre indoor track during inclement weather. Members often meet after the walk for a social time at a local Tim Hortons.

World Awareness 3rd Monday at 9:30 a.m. The group gathers for lively discussions in the meeting room at **McCleister Funeral Home**. Among the topics of interest were the Israel/Gaza conflict, environmental issues, and mental health concerns. Related articles and book titles are often exchanged. To help counter the impact of constant negative news in the media, the group make a point of including some good-news stories.

For further information regarding the groups, or if you wish to join a group, please contact:

Roma Makkreel, Interest Groups Chair 12makkrom@gmail.com 519-752-2806



Interest Groups

Monday Evening Book Group: *The War We Won Apart* by Nahlah Ayed tells the real-life story of Sonia Butt, a Briton who was raised in France, and Guy d'Artois a French Canadian raised in Quebec. Both were secret agents with Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) and fell in love during training for a mission in Nazi-occupied France. Both agents' tasks involved working with the French Resistance to perform sabotage and reconnaissance to disrupt German operations ahead of the D-Day landings. The book details their experience while working separately in France and explores how the war shaped the rest of their lives.

The author brings attention to the difference in legacies between Sonia and her husband Guy. Despite her crucial contributions, Sonia's role was unacknowledged while Guy received numerous decorations for his service. The book argues that this was a common experience for many female agents who were expected to return quietly to civilian life.

The author, Nahlah Ayed, is the host of CBC Ideas and is particularly interested in the range of roles occupied by women in war.

Telling Sonia's story felt like a very natural thing for her to do. In a CBC Books Interview, the author says, "I'm very excited for people to know more about this, the story of Sonia, because not only was she a participant in the war, but she also spent a lifetime raising another generation of Canadians. She was a war bride and combatant and civilian and immigrant all rolled into one." This book was enjoyed by the group. We all agreed that we learned something new and valuable. Karen S.



Thursday Evening Book Group: The club discussed the book *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon. Our members unanimously recommended this historical fiction about an 18th century midwife in Maine. She leverages her standing as a medical professional to investigate two crimes: a murder and a rape. The author

writes about a female protagonist and explores themes of Puritan Shame Culture and Gender Oppression, the Courtroom as a Theatrical Spectacle and Familial Loyalty in the face of suspicion. I couldn't put this book down! Dian K.

Bicycling Group: A lovely outing in the bright autumn colours.



Creative Cookery: Our October meeting provided an opportunity to explore and enjoy some exciting new recipes together. Sandra H.



Walking Group: Out enjoying a glorious fall day!

Food for Thought: Pot luck fun!



Dining Out:

Discovering new restaurants, sharing good food and great conversation doesn't solve all the problems of the world but it certainly provides enjoyable adventures and discussions. This month revealed the

amazing transformation of the factory outlet mall into the Gaslight District in Cambridge, with its vibrant entertainment options and a delightful restaurant called The French. The food was delicious, the service excellent and the venue bright and modern (and busy, so make a reservation).

Thanks to Lin F. for searching out and organizing these amazing venues for us to experience.



2025–2026 EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENT IN NAME:

- Barbara Melara

PAST PRESIDENT:

- Janet Kempster

ROTATING PRESIDENTIAL TEAM:

- Diane Bradley/Pat McGinnis—June to August
- Lucie Costin-Hall— September
- Betsy Capitano—October
- Wendy Bethune—November
- Maria Timmons— December, January
- Catherine Sawyer- February
- Linda Tripp—March
- Dian Kuzyk—April
- Barbara Melara—May

SECRETARY:

Arlene Cass

TREASURER: Maria Timmons

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

- Communications:** Sandra Hughes
- Interest Groups:** Roma Makkreel
- Membership:** Marsha Skrypuch
- Program:** Colette Wilson
- Scholarship:** Karen Innes
- Social:** Lynne Duncombe
- Advocacy:** Teddy Buzek

2025 Tax Receipts

The tax receipts will be handed out at the November General Meeting and the Holiday gathering in December. Tax receipts will only be issued for donations of \$20.00 or more in the calendar year.

Maria T., Treasurer

AGM and Banquet



Please reserve
MAY 27th, 2026
on your calendar.

Lynne D..



General Meeting

Time: 6:30pm, November 26, 2025

Location: McCleister Funeral Home or in your home, at your computer on a Zoom call.

Program: Volunteer Engagement

Kari Astles will be discussing the impact of volunteerism in our community, trends we are seeing and how to connect with local volunteer opportunities that meet your skills, interests and availability. We will also talk about the barriers to volunteering and what can be done to overcome them. **Kari Astles** is a seasoned professional in volunteer engagement and community involvement with over 25 years of experience. Her career reflects a deep commitment to fostering engaging volunteer experiences and supporting the infrastructure that enables effective volunteerism. She sees volunteerism as a form of philanthropy, where individuals generously offer their time and talents in support of the mission of the organization. Currently Kari is the Senior Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement with the Brant Community Healthcare System, overseeing volunteerism for the Brantford General Hospital and the Willett in Paris. Kari also holds a variety of volunteer roles with her professional associations at the local, provincial and national levels. She is the current President of the Brant Regional Association for Volunteer Administrators (BRAVA) and Vice-President of Volunteer Management Professionals of Canada (VMPC), as well as Co-Chair of the Mentorship Committee for the Professional Association of Volunteer Leaders of Ontario.

Linda T.

Note: At the October General Meeting it was decided by the members by a show of hands to discontinue the treats prior to the meetings.



It is time once again for our annual pot luck Holiday Get Together.

PLACE : Barbara Melara's home in St. George

DATE: DECEMBER 10, 2025

TIME : 5:00 pm

Please bring finger foods, plated and ready to serve. If your last name starts with a letter between A and K bring a dessert and if your last name starts with a letter between L and W bring an appetizer. You are welcome to bring your favourite beverage. Tea and sparkling water will be available. Please remember to bring a **2 dollar donation** to offset the cost of rental plates and wine glasses.

Lynne D.