

# WI Connections

Electronic Newsletter for Federated Women's Institutes of Canada



*Together We Rise...*



FWIC & Canada Area ACWW  
 are collaborating for a...  
***WI Day, International  
 Women's Day, &  
 Advocacy Event***  
 via Zoom- Wednesday Feb 19th  
 starting at 6:30 pm Eastern Time  
 registrations@fwic.ca

In this issue...	
From the President's desk....	Page 2
Provincial Focus - NL	Page 3
Sustainable Style	Page 4
Ellen's Corner....	Page 6
Finding Voice	Page 16
New Year's Resolution	Page 18
Winter Colouring	Page 19

## From the President's desk...

Happy New Year! I hope you are enjoying the best of the holiday season with your family and friends.

It is remarkable to consider that it has been a quarter of a century since we welcomed the year 2000. Many of us remember the concerns regarding whether computers could effectively handle the transition and whether such changes could lead to widespread infrastructure failures. Ultimately, however, those fears proved unfounded, as everything continued to function normally. Over the past twenty-five years, computers have become an essential aspect of our daily lives, often in ways we may not have anticipated. With the advancements in artificial intelligence, technology has streamlined various aspects of our lives, providing conveniences such as online banking, streaming services, and social media.



I refer to this example to highlight that while we often grapple with various worries, much of what causes us concern lies outside our control. What we can manage, however, is our own well-being, which allows us to better support others. For those who attended the recent national convention, Starr Cunningham presented a comprehensive self-care mental health program encompassing four key areas: physical, emotional, social, and spiritual.

The physical aspect emphasizes the importance of adequate sleep, regular exercise, and a healthy diet. The emotional component focuses on stress management, kindness, and compassion. Social well-being involves fostering support systems, spending quality time with others, and seeking assistance when needed. The spiritual dimension encourages solitary reflection, meditation, journaling, and connecting with nature.

As we embark on a new year, consider adopting this mental health self-care program as part of your resolutions. Participation in WI inherently supports this journey, as our activities foster support, connection, and kindness, which are fundamental to both social and emotional well-being.

In January, the FWIC will initiate our project on Sustainable Style. Brenda Devauld, who chairs this initiative, has provided an overview in this issue of WI Connections. Over the next three years, we look forward to exploring how we can make positive environmental impacts and make informed choices regarding our clothing.

We welcome your thoughts and suggestions as we pursue these initiatives together.

## Congratulations...

### Frances Bogner of Alberta Women's Institute

Frances was the successful entrant to the Past President's competition at the 2024 Conference in Truro.

Shown here - Joan Holthe, Past-President and Frances Bogner







# Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Institutes

submitted by Elizabeth Moss, President NLWI



Happy New year!

As a new year dawns, we have 14 branches throughout the province with approximately 240 members. Unfortunately, our oldest member, who was 102, as well as two others passed in December.

This year is the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NLWI and we want to celebrate. This is indeed a milestone, and I thank one and all for keeping us going for ninety years.

Our triennial convention will be held in Gander from June 6 to 8, 2025 at the College of the North Atlantic. This will be our first chance to gather face to face in several years.

We are looking forward to our WI celebrations in February for WI month, a reception at Government House in May to celebrate our members, and our Triennial Convention in June.

Our members helping hands enrich the lives of others in their communities throughout the province. We are always learning new skills and hope to increase our membership as we engage with others to pass those skills along.

We communicate with each other by email and Zoom and we raise funds by selling tickets on items we make, having afternoon teas and renting space at local craft sales.



## **Sustainable Style Initiative Project**, submitted by Brenda Devauld, Chair of National Project & BCWI Representative

Welcome to the Sustainable Style Initiative project our WI Canada FWIC National Project! We are thrilled to present this initiative and are looking forward to starting on this journey towards eco-friendly fashion choices and innovative ideas. Our goal is to blend fashion with sustainable practices and through this make a difference for ourselves, our communities and our world.



So what is the Sustainable style Initiative Project and what does it mean?

Sustainable style is about creating a wardrobe that is based on the following: environmental considerations, reducing waste, learning mindful consumption practices and helping to ensure fair practices for those that make our clothing.

This is not a program about guilt or taking the pleasure out of our clothing choices, but it is about learning new skills that will provide us with the satisfaction of knowing we can make a difference through our actions. In this time of fast fashion, of a throw away mentality and over consumption it has never been more important to practice sustainable fashion. When we consider the price of fast fashion: environmental degradations, climate change, the exploitation of people, unfair practices, we know our choices can and will make a difference.

By learning to adopt a mindful approach to our wardrobes and clothes we can have profound effects on our mental and physical well-being . This will encourage us to to reflect on what we are buying and ask ourselves these questions: do we need it, do we want it, how was it made, is it a fleeting pleasure? Our self esteem would benefit in such a positive way if we knew that our choices are good ones and we don't need endless " fast " fashion to shine.

This initiative is about building a new relationship with our clothing, one that depends on quality over quantity. Many of us may already be practicing sustainability when it comes to clothing and may have been doing so for years and we hope you will share your insights with all of us. We are going to delve into creativity for reusing and repurposing our old clothing items, so nothing is wasted or ends up in the landfills.

This is the perfect time to revive those practices of mending and sewing our own clothing. The WI could put on classes or demonstrations in our local communities to help educate and promote the creative ways in which we can extend the life of our clothing. Patches on jeans could be fun, learning to darn our socks could be a new way of thinking for people that do not have these skills.

We will be reaching out to you over the next 3 years providing informative articles and facts, through the WI Connections, Facebook and the FWIC website.

A suggestion for this is incorporating a " sharing circle" time into your meetings. We have found this to be a fun and informal way in which members feel empowered to contribute. We will be providing ideas for sharing circles to help facilitate this practice.

We will also be providing Take Away ideas that are related to every article. These are ways in which we can participate and to learn to understand the problems of fast fashion. We will be posting along with this article a full list of Take away ideas for those branches that plan their yearly agendas.

The Outreach Committee will be spearheading repurposing projects, such as making denim quilts and other items during the triennium, to be used, donated or gifted to individual communities.

January 2025

We also ask that the Members, Branches and Provinces please document and share your experiences and stories on a yearly basis, ( December/January) to Brenda Devauld ( bdevauld8@gmail.com). We would like to document this Project as much as possible.

The Mary Stewart Collect says “ Teach us to put into action our better impulses, straight forward and unafraid.” That is what we will be doing, learning and sharing, one step at a time. Our learning will hopefully not only change our lives but those of our families.

“ I am only one, I can't do everything, but I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.” Edward Everett Hale

## Sustainable style...

refers to fashion and design choices.

- It focuses on waste and reducing the negative impact of clothing and accessories on the planet, people, and ecosystems.
- Adopting a sustainable style helps reduce fashion's environmental footprint while encouraging thoughtful consumption.

**#TogetherWeRise**





# Ellen's Corner,

submitted by Dr. Ellen McLean

As a long time volunteer, Dr. Ellen has served Women's Institute for several decades. Living in Nova Scotia, she is an important part of Women's Institute of Nova Scotia; she is a former Board member and former President of FWIC; and she has served on many committees and offices, including ACWW World President.

She writes a monthly column for WI Connections to provide a historical perspective of WI then and now. If you have questions for Ellen, please forward them to [wiconnections@fwic.ca](mailto:wiconnections@fwic.ca)



Happy New Year All!

Amid downed telephone services and computer troubles, I have provided this month's story verbally, just between Christmas and New Year's.

It was a wonderful Christmas for our family this year, despite a snowstorm on Christmas Eve. I was fortunate to have my three children, and their families come to the farm for a Danish-style buffet. We enjoyed traditional Christmas delicacies, including cold herring, smoked salmon, pate, and sliced ham with our favourite red cabbage coleslaw. The next day we travelled to my son's home, with the family for a wonderful Christmas celebration. We felt blessed to be together as 2024 comes to a close.

This month, I was asked how we used to distribute information and ideas amongst the WI provincial units over the decades. Interestingly we give great credit to the different Departments and Ministries of Agriculture across the country, as they were instrumental in providing letters that crossed our great country from one end to the next. Later we used the telephone of course, but for the majority of those years, the administrators and Superintendents of WIs were responsible for preparing and updating mailing lists that were shared and used on a regular basis.

As for new Branches that were set up, an informal referral system was shared with the Superintendents when a community was considering setting up a WI Branch. They were responsible for visiting the communities, meeting with organizers, and helping to set up inaugural meetings with the necessary documentation and procedures. We were very fortunate to have them, and I fear we have never been able to replace their expertise since the various provinces disbanded their offices across Canada.

Over the past 100 years, several activities had the attention of the women in the communities. The various church groups were the most popular, followed by Lodges. And then there were the auxiliaries of the fire departments and Legions. Imagine being called the auxiliary under the guidance of the men's groups. That was one of the reasons WI came into being because we wanted to have our own group of women, for women, by women. I am so glad we have survived all these years.

In closing, I wish each of my WI sisters a wonderful 2025 as we continue to serve together for our home and country.

Sending you each the blessings of peace and joy this season.

## **Adventures in Aging** submitted by Helen Clarke, NBWI

“Adventures in Aging” was the theme chosen at a recent District WI Convention. with a specific focus on Pelvic Health.

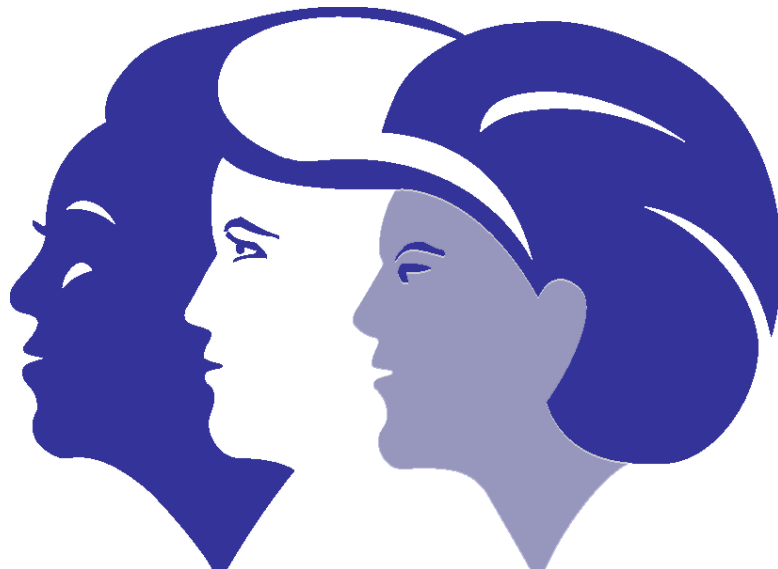
A Physio Therapist whose clinic specializes in Deep Core and Pelvic Floor Stability, spoke plainly and humorously about this topic. She spoke about the proper alignment of the spine, rib cage and pelvis for optimal movement and balance. About breathing out before exerting as you lift something up.

Many members admitted to forgetting to breathe and catching themselves frequently out of breath as a result. We were all asked to stand up. The therapist checked out our stance, if our shoulders were level, if our bellies and buttocks, and spine were in line or were “S” shaped, and if we were hunching or standing straight. This was an eye-opener for many. Core and Pelvic floor dysfunction happens in many ways and leads to a variety of health issues. Urinary incontinence and urgency, pelvic organ prolapse (bladder, uterus, or rectum), low back pain, pain with intercourse, a feeling of pressure, diastasis rectus abdominus (raised ridge of abdominal muscles), constipation and fecal incontinence, to name a few.

The actual stability muscles are small but mighty. But they need to know when to engage. We were encouraged to practice pelvic tightening and releasing exercises. And to do squats and the bridge while exhaling and concentrating on the process. Drinking water and eating fibre are key to healthy elimination. Many questions were asked and were answered straight forward. The therapist shared that most of the pelvic conditions that women have suffered from in the past are fixable with simple exercises pertinent to the issues. Often doctors only attempt to fix with operations, devices and medications, and rarely suggest exercises or physical therapy. It was refreshingly hopeful for all those present to know of the alternative and non-invasive treatments currently available.

There are many more “Adventures in Aging” to consider. Such as balance issues, dizziness, loss of muscle mass, lack of interest in many things, (feeling blase, etc.), loneliness, mental as well as physical health. All are worthy of learning more about to prevent premature decline. As busy Women’s Institute members, we often forget to take time for ourselves, to tend to our aches and pains, and changing health issues as we age. But if we don’t, we won’t be able to continue doing what we love to do - to make the world a better place, by helping and mentoring wherever we can, in as many ways as we can, as often as we can.

It’s not selfish to put ourselves first, it’s smart. Let’s age with grace.





**Tec-We-Gwill Women's Institute**  
**4380 10<sup>th</sup> line Bradford West Gwillimbury, ON L3Z 3L6**

What a fantastic initiative! The Tec-We-Gwill Women's Institute's work collecting bras for donation during Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a wonderful way to support local hospitals and women in the community. Not only does this effort raise funds for important programs at Stevenson Memorial and Southlake hospitals, but it also provides valuable resources to those in need through local clothesline stores and women's shelters. The "uplifting" nature of this campaign is both heartwarming and impactful—thank you to everyone involved! The bras are weighed and a dollar amount matching the weight is split between the two hospitals.

Thank you to the New Tecumseth Ice Cats U18AA girls hockey team for their support and a wonderful meeting! The members of Tec-We-Gwill WI had the opportunity to meet the next generation of young women working toward a future of true gender equality.

The Women's Institute (WI) is dedicated to spotlighting and driving change on issues impacting women of all ages and backgrounds—locally, provincially, nationally, and globally. It's inspiring to see the shared commitment across generations for a better, more equal world.

www.summerlandreview.com Summerland Review Thursday, April 11, 2024 Page A9

## Women's Institute played an important role in community

By David Gregory

In Summerland's early years, the Women's Institute was Summerland's the most active and prominent service group. And 100 years ago this month, April 1924, the Summerland Branch was particularly active.

The Women's Institute is an international women's group. In 1897, it was founded in Canada, in the farming community of Stoney Creek in Ontario. Adelaide Hoodless spoke to a group of farmer's wives mostly from the local Farmer's Institute. Adelaide had lost her 18-month-old son from tainted milk.

The hazards of tainted milk had not been well known by Canadian mothers. Hoodless and others decided to form a women's institute to "improve our knowledge and skills and also to enjoy each other's friendship." The Women's Institute rapidly expanded to 130 Ontario branches by 1905.

In 1909, Miss Laura Rose from Ontario, travelled to Alberta and British Columbia to promote expansion of the Women Institute. On Monday, Nov. 1, 1909, Rose presented information about the importance of museums and protection of our heritage. Most of Summerland's earliest history was preserved and protected by the branch.

In the 1960s, the Women's Institute introduced the idea of the Canada Pension Plan.

The institutes promoted the use of the emergency phone number 911.

In the last 30 years, the institute promoted environmental concerns including microplastic pollution. The Women's Institute also described the challenges of AIDS and society's dealing with mental illness.

In more recent years, the Summerland Museum has focused on the history of this important women's organization. The museum collected the documents of almost all of British Columbia's branches. Then the museum donated these documents to Kelowna's University of British Columbia Okanagan Archives.

The Women's Institute documents have been digitized. Ontario's branches have also digitized all of their documents and Quebec's efforts are almost completed.

David Gregory is a Summerland historian.

the Women's Institute at the Empire Hall. At that meeting it was decided to form a Summerland branch of the Women's Institute. Mrs. Lipsett was nominated as its first chairman. Two weeks later the Summerland Branch created the group's executive members. This was one of British Columbia's first Women's Institutes.

One hundred years ago, this month, Summerland's Women's Institute focused on improving Summerland's tourist opportunities. The appearance of the community was critical.

Summerland's roads needed repairs. Improvements of the Auto Camp (Peach Orchard Campground) were important to encourage increased tourism.

Also in April 1924, the Summerland group linked up with England's Women's Institutes. The English branches formed in 1915. Today, it is the largest women's organization in Britain. Canadian society was profoundly impacted by the branches of the Women's Institute.

The branches sent foods and clothes to soldiers in both world wars. Women's rights and equal pay for equal work was frequent themes.

The Women's Institutes promoted the building to hospitals and the creation of Public Health Units. In the 1930s the branches supported the idea of provincial park systems.

Canada's Women's Institute promoted the need to preserve Canadian history and

Adelaide Hoodless was the founder of the Women's Institute, an international women's organization founded in Ontario in 1897. In past years, the organization had been active in Summerland. (Contributed)



January 2025

## **All About Agriculture**, submitted by *Susan Hoszouski, BC Women's Institute*

ACWW - Climate Smart Agriculture

ACWW funded a new project in June 2024 -- WORD- Women's Organization for Rural Development. The main focus of this project is the promotion of sustainable agriculture among farming communities to create sustainable livelihoods, improve soil health and the environment, and contribute to the overall wellbeing of all living things.

This project is planned to last for 12 months and reach 50 Dalit women living across 5 communities in Namakkal District, Tamil Nadu, India. Participants will attend training in sustainable horticulture methods utilizing indigenous crops. The women will attend intensive training sessions, field demonstrations, and farmer field schools. Indigenous seeds will be distributed, like okra, aubergine, chilies, gourds and greens. The women farmers will also be provided with organic inputs, like herbal pesticides, crop tonics, and fertilizer. They will also have seed collection sessions so farmers can create their own seed banks for future use and to share with other farmers.

Participants of this project already own small plots of land, approximately a quarter of an acre. This will enable them to implement the training in the sustainable agriculture method they received. The land was being underutilized, raising cattle or other grazers rather than growing profitable crops. The project will empower the women to invest in soil health to cultivate a sustainable income from their land.

I was really excited when I read about this project, I was fortunate enough to attend the ACWW conference in Chennai, India. One can really understand the need and value of a project like this after being there and seeing it with your own eyes.

A little highlight of Canadian agriculture:

In Canada, potatoes set a harvest record for 2024. It was a fantastic year for potato growers. Farmers harvested nearly 127 million hundred weights of potatoes, breaking last year's record of 126.593 million hundred weights. Although the potato yield per acre dipped slightly this year, the harvested area across the country increased by 2000 acres, making it a total of 383,666 acres in 2024.

A warm and relatively dry fall in potato-growing regions across Canada allowed producers to harvest the vast majority of the seeded area (98%). Increases in yields and total potato production over the last 15 years have been an untold success story in Canada's agriculture industry.

Potato production has also boomed, thanks to the expansion of french fry plants in Western Canada. Cavendish Farms, McCain Foods, and Simplot built new frying plants or expanded existing plants in Manitoba and Alberta in recent years. In 2023, McCain's invested in its french fry plant near Coaldale, Alberta that will double the size of the plant. Alberta has become the potato capital of Canada and is followed by Manitoba and then Prince Edward Island for 2024. Keep enjoying those french fries!!! My favorite is still mashed with gravy and my husband would say mashed with (real) fresh cream which was his favorite growing up.

Hope you had a great Christmas and Happy New Year everyone. All the best to you and your family in 2025.



January 2025

## Marie Kenny, ACWW Canada Area President.



Greetings Everyone, Happy New Year!!!

I trust everyone has had a wonderful holiday season and I wish you well as we begin the New Year. A New Year to me is like a field of fresh snow in the early morning after a night of the white flakes falling. There are no tracks or marks on it, just clean, white snow ready for a fresh trail to be made. As we begin 2025 it is like a fresh trail with a vision of renewed hope. My hope is it will present new opportunities for learning, engagement and building stronger relationships in families and communities.

As one of the largest global NGO's for Rural Women, ACWW has the opportunity and the obligation to offer fresh vision and renewed hope for women and girls, so that no one is left behind and everyone has the opportunity to have their voice heard.

As we begin 2025, Canada Area will work on the second of three resolutions passed at the Triennial World Conference in 2023. This past year we had a very successful campaign in raising awareness and addressing food waste. I once again thank you for your leadership and participation in the work of the first resolution.

The resolution for this year was moved by: Rural Women New Zealand and reads as follows: "The Establishment of Rural Women's Employment Action Plan. The directive of the resolution is: "That ACWW urge all governments to address the particular needs of rural women by working with representative groups to establish, implement and regularly monitor a Rural Women's Employment Action Plan which ensures access to training and education, fair, equitable and safe employment practices, working conditions and remuneration; access to resources such as finance, materials, technology and land/property and; including but not limited to advice on career, business and entrepreneurship."

To begin our collaborative effort on this resolution, I am inviting all society members to join me for a one-hour Zoom meeting with Dr. Elizabeth Ann Kelly, ACWW Board Lead on Advocacy. The date is February 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm EST. To register please contact [registrations@fwic.ca](mailto:registrations@fwic.ca)

Registration for the ACWW Canada Area Conference, May 13- 15, Langford, BC is now open, please check the ACWW website for full details and registration packages. I look forward to seeing you there!

Thank you for your continued support of ACWW. Working together we are stronger!



## Recipe A Month, submitted by Debra Barrett, Manitoba WI

Home made syrup.

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon maple extract

In boiler on top of stove mix water, and both sugars. Bring to a boil and boil for 3 minutes no longer. Whisk the maple and vanilla extract in and that is it. I have a glass syrup container I put mine in. My husband just ate some and said it is as good as any we have ever bought. Cook until thick as you like



Worchestershire Sauce done ✓

- 3 onions chopped
- 1kg brown sugar
- 2 tbsp ground ginger
- 4 tbsp salt
- 2 oranges roughly chopped
- 4.5 liters malt vinegar
- 2 kgs apples roughly chopped
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper 🌶️
- 2 tbsp cloves

Throw in a pot, boil slowly for 3 hours. Let cool.

Strain. Bottle. Done ✓

I add chillies 🌶️🌶️🌶️

Old recipe, so easy, so delicious, lasts forever, unless eaten quickly 😊

So many awesome ideas 🥰





January 2025

## **This & That**, submitted by Elizabeth Rushton, Alberta Women's Institute

The Famous Five – who were they, what made them famous, why did they do what they did, where did they do it and when did they accomplish it? These five Alberta women worked together for a common cause, in what became known as the Person's Case.

The 'ringleader' was Emily Murphy (also famous as the first President of FWIC) and she did most of the work preparing the case for different courts before ending up before the Privy Council of England in 1929.



Before that, women were not considered as 'persons' under the British North America Act, and Emily Murphy, a police magistrate in Edmonton, decided to challenge the assumption that the word persons in the Act meant only men. She had been nominated to the Senate several times, but the answer always came back that women were not considered persons under the Act and therefore she could not be appointed.

However, she did not back down, and with the support of Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney, and Henriette Muir Edwards, all educated and accomplished women in their own right, petitioned the Supreme Court of Canada asking if the word persons in the BNA Act included female persons. Unbelievable to us in this day and age, the answer came back that under British common law, women were persons in matters of pain and penalty but not in matters of rights and privileges.

Once again, the women regrouped and sent a petition to the Privy Council of England, then the highest court of appeal for Canada. It was a red-letter day for all Canadian women when in 1929 the five judges of that court said that yes, Canadian women were persons! Women in Canada had actually had the right to vote and run for office for some time but could not be appointed to the Senate. Ironically the first Canadian woman appointed to the Senate was not Emily Murphy but Cairine Wilson of Ontario whose name, of course, appears on an FWIC award.

If you are in Ottawa and visit Parliament Hill, to the right of the building you will see a tableau of the women celebrating the decision over cups of tea. The Famous Five Foundation educates and inspires fellow Canadians and carries-on the dedication and determination of these women for the benefit of us all.

In 1979, to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Persons Case, the Government of Canada created the Persons Case medal which has been awarded to over 200 women in recognition of exemplary contributions to the promotion of gender equality. In 1981 a charter member of my Branch, the Stony Plain Women's Institute in Alberta, was awarded the medal and went to Ottawa to receive it and there may be other WI members who have received one over the years. It would be interesting to know. Next time I hope to tell you more about each of these women and their lives.



We put the FUN in Fundraising in our November event.

On Facebook and through the Pampered Chef Table platform we learned new recipes and found new products for gifts and more.

With the help of our Pampered Chef Independent Advanced Director Lynn Johnson, FWIC realized a whopping \$1726.

Many thanks to all who participated and ordered. We hope you enjoy your Pampered Chef products and new recipes.

Stay tuned for the next Fun Fundraiser in the spring.

Your Fundraising Committee

Donna, Brenda, Janet, Angela, and Lynn







January 2025

Our WI group had a very stylish Xmas party this year thanks to our decorating guru and her helpers!! We had a great evening of food and even some Xmas songs as Klorissa Farnsworth was our speaker explaining music therapy and its uses. We brought some gifts as well to spread the Xmas cheer with donations to a few families in need of a little help from their community 🌲



Lyons Brook WI, Pictou County, Nova Scotia

January 2025

## **Social Isolation**, submitted by Sue Cushing, FWIO

Dear WI Canada members

I am excited to share some interesting statistics with you all. Preparing articles to share raising mental health issues is not a difficult task. The difficulty is deciding what to write about for your interest. This month I am writing about **loneliness**.

Background: Our branch members, in Havelock, Ontario, are aware of all the blessings we have because of where we live. Access to food, friendship, freedom, and a variety of offered activities keep us grounded. As a member of WI, we have become more involved in our rural community. It is a small Village of 1500 residents, the population swelling to 10,000 in the summer months because of all the lakes in our Township. Our WI, reaching out as we do to assist others, are aware of so many elderly, alone residents who need assistance.

According to a 2018 national survey, loneliness levels have reached an all-time high, with most surveyed reporting they sometimes feel alone. Forty percent also reported that they sometimes or always feel their relationships are not meaningful and that they feel isolated.

Such numbers are alarming because of the mental health risks associated with loneliness. "Lack of social connection heightens health risks as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day or having alcohol use disorder". Dr. Julianne Holt-Lunstad also found that "loneliness and social isolation are twice as harmful to physical and mental health as obesity". "There is robust evidence that social isolation and loneliness increase risk for premature mortality, and the magnitude of the risk exceeds that of many leading health indicators." (1)

In an effort to stem such health risks, campaigns and coalitions to reduce social isolation and loneliness have been launched in Australia, Denmark, and The United Kingdom.

But is loneliness really increasing, or is it a condition that humans always experienced at various times of life?

WHO IS MOST LIKELY?

Last year a Pew Research Centre survey of more than 6,000 adults linked frequent loneliness to dissatisfaction with one's family, social, and community life. (2)

Researchers at Florida State University College of Medicine also found that loneliness is associated with 40 percent increase in a person's risk of dementia. (3)

So, with some statistics as indicators, we WI members can reach out to assist those in our communities that are isolated. We can work with Community Care, Health Departments, our Municipal Governments to help formulate a plan to assist where there is a need. Number one is to identify the need. We can do so much. Involving those alone, in community and social groups to start. Educate our communities and encourage everyone to reach out. I throw out the gauntlet to you to read more and discuss your findings with other WI members.

## **WI Connections Contributions**

All contributions are welcome. Please send to  
[wiconnections@fwic.ca](mailto:wiconnections@fwic.ca)

jpeg and png photos are ideal, along with word documents or emailed messages.

Sorry pdf documents do not format well.

Please avoid formatting such as indenting, formatted numbers and bulleting.  
And thank you for your interest in telling about WI in your 'neck of the woods'.



Let us be large in thought, in word and deed...

This important statement, which is part of our Mary Stewart Collect speaks to our WI Vision - Fostering a future where every woman thrives and makes a meaningful impact.

These fine statements make up part of the WI Pillars of Possibility as members and branches in our communities. Yet, how do we make them come into action? I ask the question because I believe as women, we focus on helping, serving, and sometimes even following before we are conscious our own voices. Finding voice will be a topic of conversation for 2025, because each of us matters, and especially our voices.

But what if I don't want to stand out? No problem! That's a part of expressing your voice in your unique way. Not everyone will give speeches and presentations, but everyone has something to say. Let's look beyond WI for a moment and see how people find their voices.

Quilting, growing vegetables, recycling garments, and home goods are all examples of how we express ourselves and our voices.

Question: What is personal 'voice'?

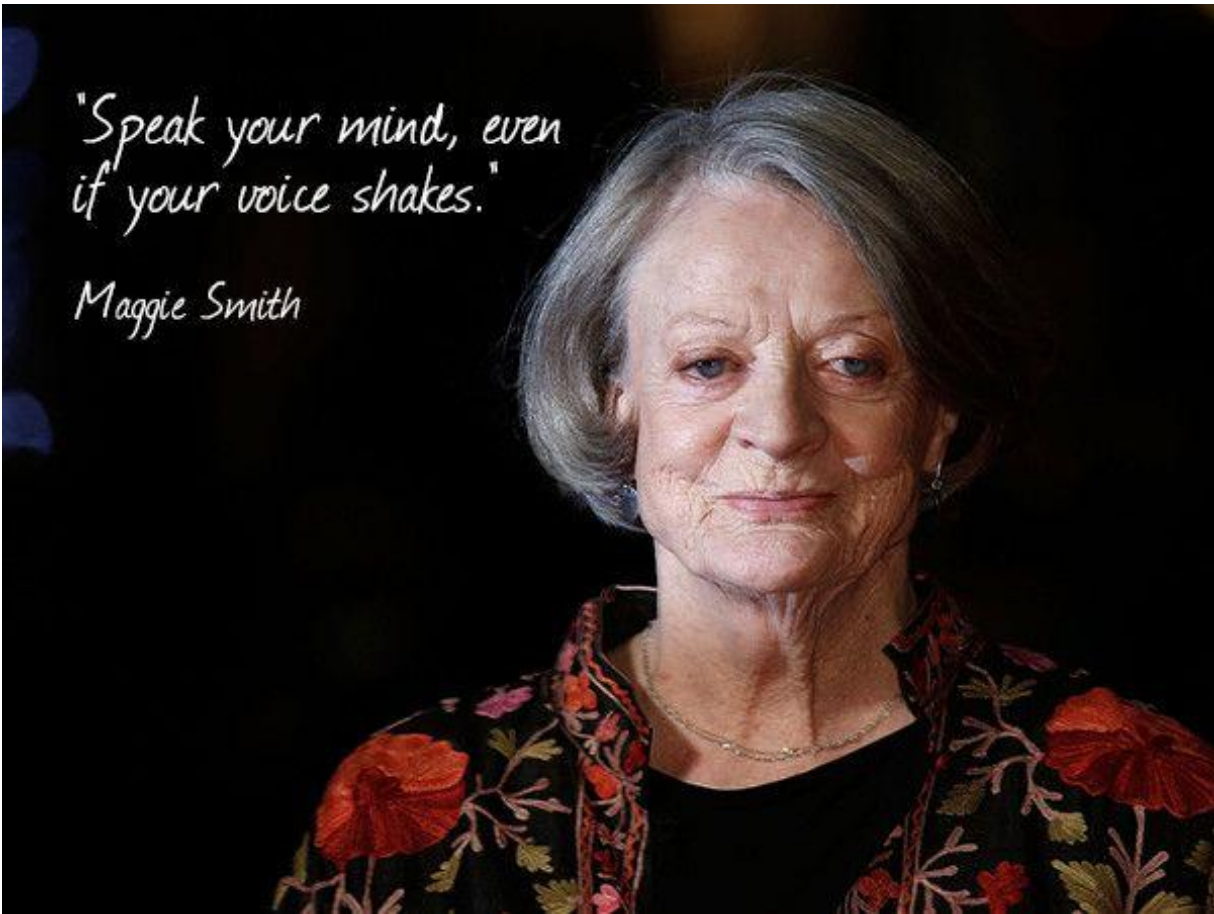
The key to voice is what each of us as individuals consider essential to living our best life. Some Key Elements of "Voice" include:

- Authenticity: Voice should reflect who you truly are.
- Confidence: Sharing your conviction(s), knowing that your ideas and opinions are valid.
- Clarity: Being clear and concise in expressing your ideas.
- Tone: The attitude or emotion behind your words—whether kind, firm, passionate, or humorous.
- Purpose: Using your voice for a reason, whether it's to inform, inspire, advocate, or connect.

The essence of you as a woman and human being is so important and valuable that I believe we might learn and enjoy a great deal from its exploration and study. A few years ago, FWIC offered 'Leadership Modules' and delved into the ideas of how and what leadership might offer direction in our WI groups.

In 2025, let's use our voices, as our vision and purpose statements suggest. And let's work together to develop and support each other. In conjunction with this work on communication and finding our voice, please email me your impressions of "finding voice". Thank you and let's talk! [angela.beth.scott@gmail.com](mailto:angela.beth.scott@gmail.com)





## Registration Is Now Open...

ACWW Area of Canada Conference

May 13 to 15, 2025

Victoria BC, Langford Legion, Langford

Early-Bird Registration -- January 1<sup>st</sup> to February 15th, 2025 - \$200.00

Registration -- Feb.16th to April 15th, 2025 -- \$225.00

To Register please go to ACWW website--- [acww.org.uk](http://acww.org.uk) > Conferences > (drop down)- Canada 2025

All the information regarding the conference is there, pre-excursions, partner tours, etc.

We are looking forward to seeing you in May!!!

Everyone invited, everyone welcome.

Happy New Year to all, from the Conference Planning Committee

## New Year's Resolutions – Crafting Style, submitted by Ann Mandziuk, Manitoba WI

I've spent time thinking about what craft to talk about for January and haven't come up with an idea.



Then, I saw the FWIC Facebook post on Decluttering and thought, okay, why not take a serious look at my 'craft' stash.

Your stash could be knitting, crocheting, sewing, or other crafts you make including the tools, etc. you use in creating the product. Mine is mostly fabrics, papers for making cards, and miscellaneous crafting items. How many times have you said, "what was I going to make with this?". For me, that is a very common statement!

So, let's take a look – a serious look, at what you have and if you are planning on using it. My daughter and I did this over the summer and came up with a large box of items. Our motivation was a 'Destash' sale

in a local community.

My New Year's Craft resolution is to look at what I have and make some serious decisions on what I will realistically be using. If I plan on keeping the items, then I will create a list of what I plan to make with the materials. I keep the plastic bags like the ones bed sheets used to come in and the ones with zippers are really useful. They make great storage containers for my fabrics, and I add a label to remind myself what I plan to construct – 11 1/2" doll clothes, placemats, mug rugs, or lap quilts.

Another storage idea I utilize is document sleeves for pattern pieces. It works great for the doll clothes patterns I have. I also like it for many of my quilt patterns and some of the patterns/ideas I plan to use.

If you have several members in your Institute/Branch this might end-up as an activity for your group to participate in. You could sponsor a 'Destash' Sale where people rent a table and sell their own items. You could pool items if they are donated, sell them, and then the funds raised be put to a project in your community. Maybe there are community groups where the items could be used. One community close to me has a Mom's Morning Out and they might appreciate donated items they could use for crafts. Schools, Sunday Schools, Day Cares, 4-H Clubs, and after-school programs might also be able to use your extras. The sky is the limit for what can be done.

## CONTACTS

To contact the FWIC president, email her at [president@fwic.ca](mailto:president@fwic.ca) or call her cell at 902 759 4755. Lynn lives in Nova Scotia.

To contact the president-elect, email Angela at [president-elect@fwic.ca](mailto:president-elect@fwic.ca). Angela lives in New Brunswick.



