

Monthly Newsletter for Federated Women's Institutes of Canada

# WI Connections



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## From the President's desk...

Happy New Year! As we welcome 2026, I want to send you my warmest wishes for a year brimming with joyful moments and exciting new possibilities. The start of a new year often inspires us to set New Year's resolutions—a gentle promise to ourselves to grow or bring about positive changes. Maybe you're thinking of starting something fresh, tweaking old routines, or tackling a difficult decision. No matter your goals, these resolutions can help us move forward. I know from experience that sticking with resolutions isn't always easy, but every January offers an excellent opportunity to start anew and realize our potential. Here's to a fulfilling and uplifting year ahead!



As WI approaches its 129th anniversary, it's a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our journey. We might ask ourselves: Which directions should we explore next? What priorities truly matter to us now? Are there any areas where a little strategic rethinking could help us grow? Although these questions remain on the table, they inspire us to keep the conversation going and stay connected as we, collectively, look to the future.

For over a hundred years, WI has dedicated itself to supporting resolutions that enrich the lives of women and families. Our FWIC archive of past resolutions highlights our members' innovative spirit and strong commitment. Their remarkable legacy inspires us to focus on truly important issues, such as creating safe spaces for infants, providing police with training on domestic abuse, advocating for more substantial penalties against human trafficking, and expanding inclusive services for transgender individuals. We warmly invite you to consider which topics should be at the forefront of future resolutions. If you have ideas to share or want to help craft resolutions, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Resolutions Committee or me—we'd be delighted to hear from you. And remember, new committee members are always very welcome!

Looking ahead to the new year, we're excited about the many opportunities to grow, sharpen our goals, and continue advocating effectively. We truly appreciate your insights, teamwork, and enthusiasm as we work together to achieve even greater progress.

Wishing you a wonderful new year filled with fresh motivation and a sense of pride in our shared achievements. Thank you so much for your ongoing dedication to WI.

Wishing you health, fulfillment, and collective success in the year ahead.

-Lynn

**Join WI members from across the country to celebrate  
the founding of the Women's Institutes in Canada**



**Thursday, February 19, 2026  
6:30 pm Eastern Time**

**Virtual Event hosted by FWIC- WI Canada**

You are encouraged to register and receive the Zoom link by emailing [registrations@fwic.ca](mailto:registrations@fwic.ca). The Zoom link will be distributed a few days before the event.

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## Building Tomorrow Together, Submitted by President

Cornwall Confederation Branch, Past President, PEIWI Sheila Gallant

### PARTNERSHIPS WORK...

While serving as President of the Provincial Women's Institute, which ended in May 2025, I was approached by a university student who asked if international students could become members of the Women's Institute. I approached a current branch in the city of Charlottetown to determine if they would be willing to accept international university students as members of their branch. I forwarded a call for membership to both the University of Prince Edward Island and Holland College, and the response was more than we anticipated initially.

Twenty students put their name forward to become members. This large number posed a challenge for the Charlottetown branch; therefore, I decided to create a brand-new branch. Over the course of 1.5 years, our core membership dropped to 5 members because students graduated and moved on, ended up in time conflicts with their studies and perhaps did not feel it was a fit for them. Without an operating budget and difficulties finding a free location to meet, I became worried about the future of the branch.

The current community in which I live did not have a Women's Institute Branch. I approached the town of Cornwall and was connected with the Parks and Recreation Department of the Town. The core group of 5, plus additional new members from the community of Cornwall, entered into a partnership where the newly established Cornwall branch would have assistance from the town with a free room to meet and a kitchen to use at their Civic Centre, as well as help with advertising and marketing for any of the branch events. In return, our branch offered to provide volunteers at the town's community functions. The branch is committed to providing volunteers at the town's Veterans Dinner, Canada Day events, Breakfast with Santa, and the annual Corn Fest. The branch is also exploring providing a regular roster of curriculum that would be open to the public.

Our new branch had to be willing to give a little to get a little in return. Meanwhile, while volunteering at these events, the branch is beginning to become well-known in the community, and our members are getting to meet new people and give back to the community.

Partnerships can, and do work, and they can be fun. If you are a branch that has been struggling to come up with new ideas for things to do, why not approach another organization in your community to create partnerships where you work together for events or to give back to your community? If you are in an area where there is no branch and you would like to have one, approach your town or community to help you get started by suggesting a partnership where you help each other.

### *WI Connections Contributions Welcome!*

Do you have a story or idea to share? As a WI member your input is appreciated and we would love to have stories, recipes, photos, activities....anything and everything WI!

Please send JPEG and PNG photos (ideally) to [wiconnections@fwic.ca](mailto:wiconnections@fwic.ca), along with Word documents or emailed messages. Sorry, PDF documents do not format well.

To contact the FWIC president, please email Lynn MacLean 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), 506-277-6340. Angela lives in New Brunswick.



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## Finding Voice, Submitted by Angela Scott, President-Elect, FWIC

### Advocacy: What It Really Means for WI Women

When we hear the word *advocacy*, many of us picture politics, protests, or heated debates. But advocacy, at its heart, is much simpler—and much closer to what Women's Institute members have always done.

Advocacy means speaking up—kindly, clearly, and purposefully—so that women, children, families, and communities are considered and cared for. In fact, WI has advocated since its earliest days, often without using that word.

#### Advocacy Starts with Us

Before we can advocate for others, we need to be able to advocate for ourselves. This is sometimes the most challenging part for women.

Self-advocacy can look like:

- Asking questions instead of staying silent.
- Saying "I need more time" or "I need help."
- Speaking up when something doesn't feel right.
- Setting reasonable boundaries around our time and energy.

Many women were raised to put everyone else first. WI reminds us that caring for ourselves is not selfish; it allows us to contribute more fully to our families, branches, and communities.



#### Advocating for Others—The WI Way

Advocating for others doesn't mean speaking over them or telling them what they need. It means ensuring voices are heard, especially when someone feels unsure, overwhelmed, or left out.

This might include:

- Asking how a decision will affect families or caregivers.
- Helping someone understand a form, policy, or process.
- Making space in meetings for quieter voices.
- Standing alongside someone who needs support.

This kind of advocacy is grounded in listening, compassion, and practical care—hallmarks of WI work.

#### Advocacy Happens Every Day

Advocacy isn't limited to council chambers or formal resolutions. It happens:

- At branch meetings.
- In community halls.
- At school events.
- In healthcare settings.
- Around kitchen tables.

Every time WI members identify a need, discuss solutions, and take thoughtful action, advocacy is happening. From improving education and health services to supporting food security for seniors and families, WI women have long understood that small, steady voices working together can make real change.

#### Why Advocacy Matters

Advocacy helps ensure that decisions reflect real lives, not just paperwork or policies. When women share their experiences and perspectives, communities become stronger, fairer, and more responsive.

Just as importantly, advocacy reminds us that our voices matter, at every age and stage of life.

#### Advocacy Is Something We Do Together

You don't need special training, a title, or a loud voice to be an advocate. Advocacy begins with caring, grows through conversation, and becomes powerful when women support one another.

That is what the Women's Institute has always done—bringing women together, sharing wisdom, and quietly shaping better communities.

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## Breaking Ground: Women in Trades and Technology,

Submitted by Cheryl Sullivan, President of FWIO

Across construction sites, workshops, and server rooms, women are steadily reshaping industries once considered off-limits. More women are choosing careers in the skilled trades and the technology sector, breaking stereotypes and proving that talent, determination, and innovation are not defined by gender.

The trades—such as electrical work, plumbing, carpentry, welding, and heavy equipment operation—have long been male-dominated fields. These jobs are demanding. They often involve physically strenuous labor, dirty work environments, long shifts, on-call hours, and significant time spent traveling between job sites. Despite these challenges, increasing numbers of women are entering apprenticeship programs and building long-term careers in the trades. For many, the appeal lies in hands-on work, strong job security, competitive wages, and the satisfaction of seeing tangible results at the end of the day.



Women in trades also bring valuable perspectives to the workforce. Employers frequently note strengths such as attention to detail, problem-solving skills, and effective communication. As more companies recognize the benefits of diverse teams, workplaces are slowly adapting—offering better-fitting safety gear, mentorship programs, and inclusive training environments that support women's success.

At the same time, women are making major strides in the technology sector. From software development and cybersecurity to data analysis and engineering, women are increasingly involved in shaping the digital world. Careers in technology often require long hours, continuous learning, and intense focus, but they also offer flexibility, creative problem-solving, and the opportunity to work on innovations that impact everyday life. Technology and trades may seem like different worlds, but they share common ground: both rely on technical skill, critical thinking, and adaptability. Women entering these fields are not only filling labor gaps but also challenging outdated assumptions about who belongs there.

As more women break ground in trades and technology, they pave the way for future generations. Their presence helps normalize diversity in these careers and inspires young people to pursue paths based on interest and ability rather than tradition. The result is a stronger, more inclusive workforce—one that better reflects the world it serves.

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## Sustainable Style with Mindful Consumption, Submitted by Brenda Devauld,

BCWI

### Building Intentional Habits

Here we are at the start of a New Year, and with that comes the idea of New Year's Resolutions. The idea in itself is a good one, but sometimes I know for myself I have had very lofty goals, which I have mostly not been able to keep. I think maybe that is because for many of my resolutions, I was trying to stop doing something, so I was focusing on negative actions, not positive ones.

This year, I am trying to build intentional habits for myself, not too many, but some that really resonate for me and line up with my core beliefs. For me, this means being very conscious of what I buy so I can create less waste and challenge my mind (as we age, we know that is a good thing!) by trying new things or spicing up the things that I already do. I find that the more I practice, the better I get!

So, how do we know what Intentional Habits are, and how do we start?

- Intentional habits are those that you try to do because they align with your true core values and what actually really matters to you.

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- They help you live with more purpose because they are action-oriented.
- They help add focus and meaning to your everyday living because they are positive actions that you are adding to your life. Rather than things that you are going to stop doing.
- They are often small, conscious choices that you have decided to take towards building a feeling of well-being, rather than leaving it to chance.
- They support self-development and long-term happiness.

Our intentions work not only in helping our development ourselves, but also help to give us a sense of calm and direction in our lives. They help us focus on what really matters to us and help us create the life we want. By merging our Sustainable Style message regarding fashion with Intentional habits, we can create a life of living mindfully and responsibly, which not only benefits you personally and the world around us.



*“Every sunset is a chance to reset”* - Richie Norton

## Homestead Report, Submitted by Veronica Boone, Interim Museum Manager A Very Special Thank You...

As we reflect on the past year, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you who supported our museum through your generosity, enthusiasm, and presence at our many events.

Your donations and attendance made it possible for us to bring engaging programs, meaningful exhibitions, and memorable experiences to our community. Whether you joined us for a special event, supported us financially, or explored the museum, you played an essential role in helping us fulfill our mission.

Because of you, the museum remains a place of learning, inspiration, and connection. We are deeply grateful for your belief in our work and for being such an important part of our story.

We look forward to welcoming you back in the year ahead and sharing even more exciting programs and events with you. Thank you for making this past year truly special.

### To come in 2026...

Starting this February, the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead will once again begin offering a range of exciting events and workshops you can look forward to. Make sure to check out our website ([www.adelaidehoodless.ca](http://www.adelaidehoodless.ca)) and social media pages for more details and registration information. For now, enjoy these sneak peeks!



**Legacy Love Letter workshop with Dr. Michael Williams (Date/Time TBD)** - Come and create a meaningful letter of admiration and appreciation this Valentine's, guided by our writer in residence, Dr. Michael Williams.

**Couples Paint Night (18+) (Date/Time TBD)** – Enjoy an evening of wine, painting, and a surprise couples challenge with artist Pattie Errygers.

**Addie's 169<sup>th</sup> Birthday Tea Celebration (Date/Time TBD)** – In celebration of Addie's 169<sup>th</sup> birthday, join us for a classic afternoon tea party surrounded by the charm of Addie's childhood homestead.

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## PEI Member Highlights for FWIC – Louise MacLeod & Reta MacDonald

### Louise MacLeod

At a very young age, I was aware of the local branch of the Women's Institute, as my mother and my mother-in-law were both life members of the local branch, as well as many of my friends' mothers belonged to the local group.

I married in 1956 and have always lived in the same community. It was the custom that young brides were invited and encouraged to join the local branch of the Women's Institute. I remember feeling at the time that I was too young to join. But I did and have been a lifelong member of the Institute ever since.

Our local group was always engaged in provincial projects, as well as being very active in the community.

Through the years, we have encountered many challenges, such as buying the former schoolhouse and upgrading it so that it is now a certified "Warming Center". We established an "Honor wall" in our center in memory of the soldiers of the area who have served in the various wars and conflicts.

I was involved in both these projects, and I am very proud to be a Life member of this worldwide organization of women, as we continue to follow the advice which is indicated in the "Mary Stewart Collect", which we repeat monthly and yearly as we continue to work for Home and Country.

*(PEIWI note - Louise MacLeod was named the recipient for both the provincial and national award, the 2025 Adelaide Hoodless Hunter award.)*

### Reta MacDonald

I first experienced the Women's Institute as a little girl growing up on a farm in rural Prince Edward Island. My mother was a W.I. member at the time. It was an exciting day when she was getting ready to host the ladies of the community for their monthly meetings. Everything had to be "spic & span".

The fancy cups and saucers came out, and sandwiches and sweets were served on her fancy plates. The men usually brought the ladies so they could play cards and settle world affairs in the kitchen while the W.I. meeting was held in the living room. It seemed to me that almost all the ladies of the district belonged to the Women's Institute. It was their major outing for the month, except for church on Sunday. I can remember the WI ladies gathering in the one-room schools to wash walls, clean windows, scrub desks, and floors.

When I grew up and began to teach school, the teacher was expected to join the local W.I. and so I did at age 18.

It was a way to meet the moms of the children I taught and to report what things were needed at the school. They supplied such essentials as blackboard erasers, toilet tissue, and chalk.

After I married a farmer, my mother-in-law took me to the W.I. meeting the very next month. It was a great way to meet most of the ladies of my new community. So, I have been a member of W.I. ever since, and that's over 70 years. After my husband passed away and I had retired from teaching, I joined the Provincial W.I. Board. During my time there, I made many new friends. I enjoyed working with them, helping with programs, and learning a lot while doing it. Shortly thereafter, I started going to the National Conventions, widening my horizons and making more new friends. I've been to a National Convention in every province in Canada. It was wonderful. I had the honour of being our Provincial President. During my two-year term, I made a point of attending each of the District Conventions on the Island. It was really a very enjoyable experience meeting W.I. members from one end of the province to the other.

Several years ago, under the capable leadership of our own Marie Kenny, two Bike Tours were held to raise funds for two of our hospitals. This really brought the W.I.'s together. W.I. members along the route provided Bed and

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Breakfast to the bikers as well as Dinner in the evening at a central location. A snack truck met the bikers along the route. I was the lucky one to drive that truck.

Women's Institute has meant a lot to me over the years, and I still look forward to our regular monthly meetings. The organization has enhanced my life ever since I became a member at age 18, my first year of teaching school. I'm proud to belong to our great Women's Institute organization.

*(PEIWI note – Reta MacDonald served as President of the provincial PEI Women's Institute 2001-2003)*

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

THE FEDERATED WOMEN'S INSTITUTES OF CANADA CELEBRATE DIAMOND JUBILEE AT THEIR FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTION. Theme: Home Improvement and Betterment of Communities. This headline announces the content of the January 1958 edition of Volume 3, No. 1 of Federated News, and it makes for fascinating reading.

Some of the information has been mentioned before, so please forgive me if I repeat myself. The Convention was held at the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa, Oct. 28-31, 1957, and the Opening Ceremonies were marked with "simplicity, beauty and dignity". Over 400 delegates were present from all ten provinces, including Mrs. G.A. Glidden, who was just 15 when she joined the Stoney Creek WI along with her mother when that first branch was formed. Prime Minister John Diefenbaker (whose wife was also on stage) paid tribute to the Women's Institute calling them "Architects of the future who benefit not only mankind today but future generations by building citizenship based on the capacity to live with one's neighbours." Greetings were read from many organizations around the world, including the Country Women's Council of the United States.

The Hon. Ellen Fairclough, Canada's first woman cabinet minister, spoke on the topic "Your Citizenship", urging friendliness to newcomers.

The banquet, held later that evening, was televised and featured a three-tier birthday cake decorated in blue and gold (a gift from the Ontario WI) and lit with sixty candles. The guest speaker was Mr. Lester B. Pearson (later Prime Minister Pearson, of course), who had recently received the Nobel Peace Prize and spoke on Canada and the World Community.

On another evening, the delegates were bused to the Glebe Collegiate, where the local Ottawa Council of Women hosted a supper party, followed by a fashion show and a panel discussion on Fashions and Fabrics. Altogether about 1500 women attended the evening. An unexpected highlight was an impromptu speech by Dr. Charlotte Whitten, who said that she had stopped off at the founding meeting of FWIC in Winnipeg in 1919 and commented that the WI ladies of those days were women of conviction and convincing words.

Among many reports was one from Mrs. J.W. Adams, retiring president, on the ACWW Conference in Ceylon, where Mrs. Hugh Summers of Ontario, a former FWIC President, was elected one of three World Vice-Presidents.

There never seemed to be a spare moment during the Conference, from reports from the provinces, Convener's Day, a talk on good library services, a panel on "What do you know about FWIC?", a talk by the Hon. David Fulton, Minister of Justice, Canadian Highway Safety, support requested for 4-H clubs, an Exhibitors' Luncheon with entertainment. They included Simpsons-Sears, Essex Packers, DuPont Company of Canada, the Canada Starch Company, Associated Milk Foundation of Canada, Miss Mary Maxim, Robin Hood Flour Mills, Manitoba Industry and Commerce, Ottawa Library, and Canada Dept of Agriculture.

What an experience it must have been to attend!

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## Environment, Submitted by Margie Taylor, President, WINS

### Environment: Deforestation for Fashion-A Year Without Buying New Clothes

Fast fashion significantly contributes to deforestation, with over 200 million trees cut down annually for textile production, impacting biodiversity and ecosystems worldwide. Tree logging for textiles to produce cellulosic fabrics, like viscose and rayon, occurs in ancient forests, which are crucial for maintaining biodiversity and regulating the climate. Deforestation driven by the fashion industry leads to habitat destruction for countless species.

As forests are cleared, the ecosystem that supports wildlife is disrupted, resulting in a decline in biodiversity. Since 2000, forests have been estimated to have removed an average of 2 billion metric tons of carbon from the atmosphere annually. However, when trees are removed from their environment, higher CO<sub>2</sub> levels result, leading to the greenhouse effect and heightened global warming.

By understanding the connection between fashion, deforestation, and biodiversity loss, we can make more informed choices and support sustainable practices that protect our planet's vital ecosystems. When shopping for clothes, it is important that we understand what has gone into making the garment. As consumers, we have the power to transform the fashion industry into a positive effect by spending our money on clothing that is made sustainably and ethically.

So, let's shop responsibly, buy intentionally with quality over quantity in mind, maybe create that capsule wardrobe, and perhaps we could be that person who is able to avoid shopping for new clothes in the new year!

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## Marie Kenny, ACWW Area Canada President

Greetings, Everyone, Happy New Year!

I hope you have enjoyed a wonderful Christmas Season; I wish you health, peace, and joy in 2026.



Growing up on a rural farm in PEI, I am very much aware of the hard work, long hours, and dedication that it takes to be a farmer. Farmers are not just food producers; they are also stewards of the land. Farmers are the food banks that sustain human health.

The United Nations has declared 2026 the International Year of the Woman Farmer. The year will spotlight the essential roles women play across agrifood systems, from production to trade, while often going unrecognized. Women farmers are central to food security, nutrition, and economic resilience. The 2026 International Year of the Woman Farmer will raise awareness and promote actions to close the gender gaps and improve women's livelihoods worldwide.

So, who are women farmers? Women farmers are all women working in the agrifood system in different capacities across all segments of value chains. This includes farmers, producers, peasants, family and smallholder farmers, seasonal labourers, fishers, fish workers, beekeepers, pastoralists, foresters, processors, traders, traditional knowledge holders, women in agricultural sciences, formal and informal workers, and rural entrepreneurs. They encompass women in all their diversity, including young and older women, Indigenous women, and women in local communities, women with disabilities, refugee and displaced women, and others.

The definition is inclusive of women in both formal and informal work, recognizing their contributions regardless of land ownership or employment status. It reflects the diverse and essential roles all women play in sustaining

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agrifood systems including through leadership, care and domestic work, while supporting food security, contributing to economic prosperity, and improving nutrition and livelihoods for their families and communities.

The International Year of Women Farmer aims to raise awareness of the role of women in agrifood system and the challenges they face, including land tenure, financial and technical constraints, and limited access to service and education. It also seeks to encourage policies and investments that empower women in agrifood systems and to promote greater synergies among international initiatives supporting women farmers. ((Footnote: UN Women)

ACWW is pleased to announce it will be partnering with FAO (United Nation Food and Agricultural Organization) on three activities in 2026. More information will be coming forth soon on these initiatives. This is an exciting partnership, with opportunities for our members and our organization.

2026 will be an inspiring year for numerous reasons, one of which is the ACWW Triennial World Conference. Members from around the world will come together in Ottawa, Canada, from April 26 to May 1, 2026. If you have not registered for the Conference, information regarding online registration will be forthcoming very soon. Whether you are joining us in person, online, or by contributing items to the Sales Market or ACWW Competitions, my hope is that you will feel the shared belief that every ACWW member is valued and plays an important part in our organization.

Grassroots members are the backbone of ACWW because they bring the organization's mission to life through their everyday actions, local knowledge, and commitment to rural communities. Their active involvement, volunteering, and shared experiences ensure that ACWW remains grounded, representative, and effective at creating meaningful change.

As we begin this New Year, I encourage you to consider contributing to World President Magdie de Kock's special appeal to help us build stronger communities. For almost 100 years, ACWW has been at the forefront of real change by advocating for rural women's rights, strengthening networks, and funding grassroots projects. Your donation, no matter how great or how small, will help our work go even further.

Until next time, I wish you health and strength. Thank you for your continued support. It is my privilege to serve as your Area President. Together we are stronger!

Marie Kenny, ACWW Canada Area President.

## Stories to Inspire and Connect Women Submitted by

Moranda van Geest, Elgin WI, NB

Besides the fact that I have been surrounded by animals my whole life, I have always had a special place in my heart for dogs. They are such loyal companions—they truly hug your heart. It is well known that dogs help people relax. They are natural stress busters. They also help keep us healthier because they need to be walked, and walking is good for us, too. Dogs like to play and to be loved, just like people do. Quite simply, a dog is good for you.

In early January, we welcomed a new dog into our home. Our previous dog had to be euthanized after being diagnosed with cancer. Losing her was heartbreaking. While we didn't want to be without a dog for too long, I also knew that with my specific wishes, finding the right one might take some time.



The dog I was hoping for was a cross between a German Shepherd and a Border Collie—a Shollie, for short. I was prepared to wait as long as it took. Our previous dog was a rescue and brought many interesting moments to our lives, most of them rather concerning. If we heard a car approaching the yard, we would frantically look for her. Rest assured, no one dared to get out of their car with her around. She was, by far, the most challenging dog we ever had, all because of her complicated past.

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Our grandchildren took it upon themselves to start searching online for a new puppy. Soon, they found an eight-week-old Shollie pup ready to go to a new home. I told my daughter to choose the biggest, calmest puppy—the one that barked. We managed to get two out of three; he doesn't bark.

He is a wonderful dog, truly a “people dog.” He is always looking for hugs and cuddles and behaves exceptionally well. He is eager to learn new things and responds beautifully to gentle guidance and love.

Because of his calm and friendly nature, he will soon begin visiting senior homes. There, he will spend time with people who could use a little extra love from a dog. This will not only benefit the seniors he visits but also support my health and well-being. Being able to volunteer in this way is deeply fulfilling. When you see people smile, you smile too. That happy feeling can't be given to you in a pill—it is the emotional return on your own giving.

So, go volunteer. You might be surprised at how much you receive in return.



## PEIWI Happenings, Submitted by Ellen MacPhail, PEIWI

WI: New Year, New Events.

The provincial board of PEI Women's Institute sends best wishes to residents across Prince Edward Island for the new year and invites participation in several upcoming WI projects.

Across Canada, a day, a week, or the whole month is set aside to celebrate the formation of the Women's Institute. On PEI, the provincial Women's Institutes will be celebrating its community and education service from when the first branch began in the province in 1911 on February 13th.

The PEI Women's Institute will commemorate Founder's Day at the West River United Church in Cornwall with a morning lineup of engaging themes. Speakers and topics include a Farmers' Talk with Wendy Holm, Merie Surkan on recycled textiles, Monica from MacAusland Woolen Knitters, and author Julia Stewart on home-cooking recipes.

A fun Valentine's Greeting Card Exchange will also take place, where attendees are encouraged to bring a card reminiscent of childhood exchanges, and will be complemented by additional fun and games planned for the event. Participants are asked to register for this free event by February 6 online through the PEIWI website or by contacting the WI office.

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Plans are also underway for the annual “Taking Care of Women’s Business! Period. 28 Day Campaign”. PEIWI will once again collect women’s menstrual products throughout month of February. Drop-off locations include Murphy’s Pharmacies across PEI, and Mainstreet Pharmasave in Souris. These collections make a major impact across food banks across Prince Edward Island. Murphy’s Pharmacy will match up to \$500 with their house brand.

Women’s Institute members quietly participate in a discreet program known as ‘Kits for Kindness’ which provides backpacks containing essential items such as food and warm clothing to approximately 28 to 31 schools across Prince Edward Island. A dedicated WI component of this initiative, known as ‘Mitts for Kits,’ involves WI members contributing hand-knit hats, mittens, and scarves for these backpacks. Over the last few years, hundreds of items have been donated by branch members. For anyone wishing to participate, knitted donations can be dropped off at the PEIWI office. Additionally, knitters are reminded that purple hats for infants, supporting the Period of Purple Crying campaign, are accepted at QEH, PCH, and WI Office.

PEIWI also highlights farms of all sizes to its members through a poster called “Heard it Through the Grapevine - WI Spotlight on Agriculture”. PEIWI’s spotlight is facts and fun about agriculture on PEI through the eyes of WI members or the public in newsletters and on Facebook. Islanders are encouraged to highlight farm or agricultural interests to encourage knowledge of the Island’s ag industry. Pictures and a few lines can be sent to the WI office, with the submitter’s name and contact information.

Lastly, several branches across PEI are currently in the planning stages for their 2026 district meetings and are reminded that the deadline for submitting district meeting dates to their respective district executive is January 31, 2026.”

The PEIWI Board of Directors and WI Office staff wish all communities a happy, safe, and healthy new year.

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## Call for Stories: 100 Voices Across Canada

As we prepare to celebrate WI Day on February 19, 2026, the Federated Women’s Institutes of Canada invites members from coast to coast to share their voices as part of our *100 Voices: Stories That Shaped Us* project.



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Every story matters — from the traditions you’ve carried forward, to moments of friendship, learning, or leadership that shaped your journey with WI. These stories reflect the heart of who we are: women growing, supporting, and strengthening communities together.

We’re looking for **one volunteer storyteller from each province** to share a personal story during our **WI Day Online Celebration**. Whether you’ve been a member for decades or joined recently, your voice can inspire others and help us honour over a century of women’s contributions.

If you’d like to represent your province, please contact us at [info@fwic.ca](mailto:info@fwic.ca) with a summary of your story or interest by **January 6, 2026**.

Together, we’ll celebrate *100 Voices* — the spirit of WI, told in your own words.

## NOMINATIONS FOR FWIC NATIONAL AWARDS

**ADELAIDE HUNTER HOODLESS CANADIAN WOMAN OF THE YEAR:** Nominations are open for the AHH Canadian Woman of the Year and close on **March 31, 2026**.

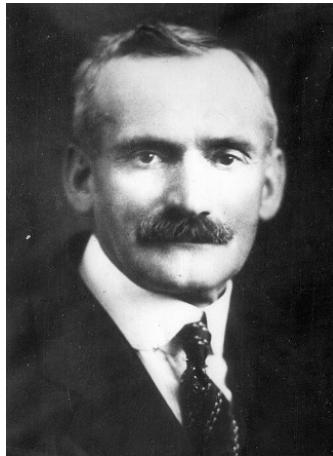


### Criteria:

1. Profile (max 750 words)
  - Exhibits qualities of Adelaide Hoodless
  - Leadership
  - Gives back to the community (locally, provincially, nationally)
  - Inspires others
2. Two Letters of Recommendation (individual or organization – not from Nominator)
3. Completed Application with Nominee's Photo & Nominator's Contact Info
4. Women's Institute Involvement (not necessarily a member)
5. Canadian citizen or permanent resident

Drop off, mail, courier, or email ([info@fwic.ca](mailto:info@fwic.ca)) your completed nomination form and the nominee's picture to:

Federated Women's Institutes of Canada  
359 Blue Lake Road, PO Box 209  
St. George, Ontario NOE 1NO



## ERLAND LEE AWARDS

This prestigious award, presented by the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, is given to a man who most exemplifies the qualities of Erland Lee that led to the founding of the Women's Institute.

### Criteria:

1. Nominations can come from the branch, district/county, provincial, or national level. Each province is entitled to one nomination per year, except Ontario.
2. Specifics of the nominee's contribution to Women's Institutes must be included with the nomination letter and forwarded to the provincial office for approval.
3. Once approved by the provincial office, the name will be sent to the national office. A cheque for \$15.00 per certificate, payable to Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC) from the nominating branch, must accompany the nomination.

Nominations for the Erland Lee Awards are open and close on **March 31, 2026**.