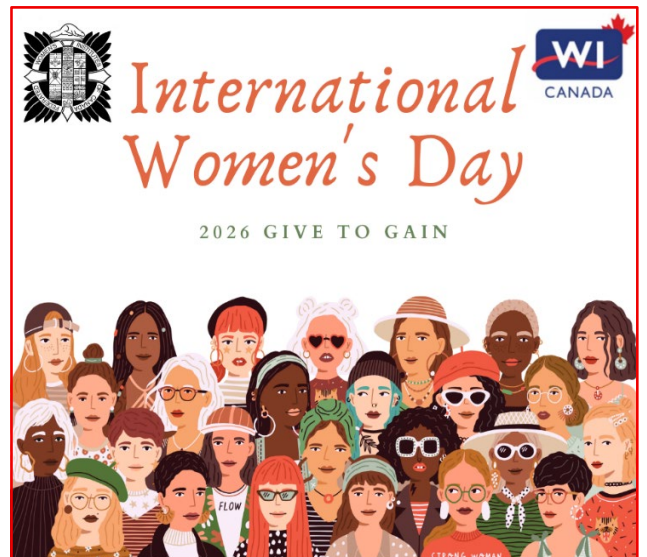




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March 2026

From the President's desk...

There's an old saying that March comes in like a lion or a lamb. If it arrives roaring — cold, windy, and stormy — we can hope for gentler days by the end of the month. But if it starts mild and calm, we might need to brace ourselves for a little winter encore before spring truly settles in. Whether it's perfectly accurate or not, it certainly captures that in-between feeling we know so well in Canada as winter slowly gives way to spring.

March is also a special time as we celebrate International Women's Day. Looking up the theme for IWD reveals two different themes. The United Nations theme is "Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls," while the International Women's Day site states it is "Give to Gain."

As members of FWIC, we are proud to recognize the incredible impact of women working together to advance rights and justice for all women and girls, while building healthier families, stronger communities, and a more resilient country. International Women's Day reminds us that equality is not only an aspiration — it is a call to action. Ensuring that every woman and girl can fully exercise her rights, access opportunities, and live free from discrimination is central to our work.

For more than a century, members of the Women's Institutes have embraced a simple yet powerful truth: when we give our time, knowledge, and compassion, everyone benefits. Through volunteer service, education, advocacy, and community leadership, our members actively support initiatives that protect rights, promote fairness, and expand opportunities for women and girls in both rural and urban communities. Our advocacy has long been rooted in the belief that justice strengthens not only individuals but society as a whole.

This year's International Women's Day themes — "Rights. Justice. Action." and "Give to Gain" — together reflect the heart of our organization. We give mentorship to emerging leaders and help them gain confidence and opportunity. We advocate for policies that protect women's rights and gain meaningful progress toward equality. We support our communities and gain a deeper sense of connection, belonging, and shared purpose. Through action, we turn principles into progress.

On International Women's Day and throughout this month, we warmly celebrate the many contributions of our members and renew our commitment to advancing rights, championing justice, and taking action that empowers women and girls in every community. Together, we show that generosity is more than kindness — it is a powerful force for equity, growth, and lasting change.

When women and girls have equal rights and opportunities, communities flourish. When justice guides our actions, our country thrives.

Till next time,

Lynn

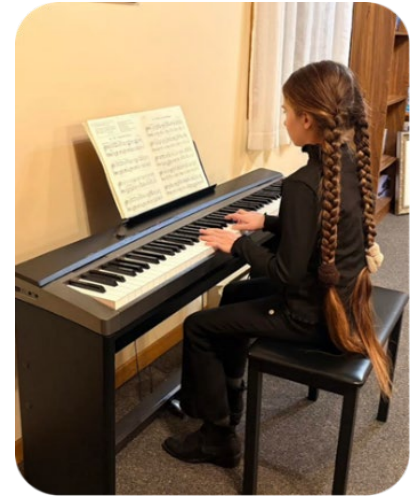


Canadian Sashes \$20.
available from Donna Henderson
donna_ross_h@yahoo.ca

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Nothing Connects like FRIENDS!, Submitted by June Crandall, Elgin WI, Secretary-Treasurer

Annually, the Elgin Women's Institute hosts a Friendship Supper for our members and at least one guest per member. The supper began by including the husbands of the members but later evolved into a members-only event and included women from the community who helped with our larger fundraising events, such as our Annual Turkey Supper. The supper is in February to coincide with Valentine's Day. On February 19th, we did it again. As I said, we do this annually. Still, this year's gathering was outstanding because this day, 129 years ago, marked the first formal organization of the Women's Institute... let that sink in... wow!



The event was well planned as usual, but this year our young WI trainee, Elizabeth (also a pianist in training), played a couple of pieces that were sweet and brought back some childhood memories. Elizabeth, homeschooled by her loving parents, also did a presentation on the Famous Five – Nelly McClung, Emily Murphy, Irene Parlby, Henrietta Edwards, and Louise McKinney. If you do not

know who these women are, I encourage you to dig into their work... they were amazing women who fought for the liberties we, as women, enjoy today.



Then we had a round of icebreaker questions that got us all laughing. This was followed by a short discussion about what friendship really means. This was impactful to me because more than ever, we find ourselves needing the closeness of community.

Yes, the food (potluck meal) was great, but the fun, the presentations, the chatting, and the friendship clearly made the evening one to remember. We had six guests for the evening who seemed to really enjoy themselves. Will they become WI members? Who knows, but we were happy to meet them and hear about their lives.

Plan your Friendship Supper and see where it goes!!

Building Tomorrow Together, Submitted by President Cornwall Confederation Branch, Past President, PEIWI Sheila Gallant

SHARING THE LOAD

My mother often reminded us that "many hands make light work." Growing up in a family of nine, we quickly learned how true that was.

Women's Institute branches are busy, active, and deeply committed to serving their communities and supporting one another. Year after year, members give their time and energy to countless activities and events. However, there is a challenge that many branches face, and it is one worth addressing.



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As the years pass, changes inevitably occur. Members grow older, experience health concerns, and manage family responsibilities. These realities can make it difficult for some women to participate as fully as they once did. When this happens, the workload often falls on a smaller group of members, and it is not uncommon to hear the comment, “It’s always the same people doing the work.”

Branch presidents regularly ask for volunteers to help with activities, yet too often, no one steps forward. The responsibility then falls to the president, or to a small number of members who are always willing to take on more. Sometimes, one person quickly volunteers to do everything, unintentionally removing an opportunity for others who might be willing to help but are hesitant to speak up.

Over time, these situations can lead to frustration, resentment, and even resignations.

As members of a Women’s Institute branch, we all share a responsibility to help carry the load. After all, many hands truly do make light work.

If your branch is experiencing any of these challenges, a simple and practical solution may help. At an early branch meeting, set aside a short session to list all of the community activities, events, and functions your branch is involved in throughout the year. Then break each event into the specific tasks that are required to make it successful.

Once the list is complete, ask every member to sign up for one task. If any duties remain after everyone has chosen one, begin a second round, invite members to select an additional task, and continue as needed.

This approach ensures that everyone makes a meaningful contribution, has the opportunity to choose something they enjoy, and helps ensure that the work is shared fairly. To keep your branch fresh and vibrant, it is recommended that this process be repeated every few years and that members be encouraged to try something new. In this way, learning continues, and new skills are developed.

Of course, consideration must always be given to members who are facing physical challenges or other limitations. Even so, there is almost always at least one task that can be identified to help those members feel included, valued, and able to contribute. As we look ahead to 2026, let us join hands and make our workloads lighter and easier—together.

.....

Women Inspiring Women Branch made a donation to the Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Care, Brantford Community Healthcare System. This money came from their “Not Your Average Saturday” fundraiser in support of Forensic Nursing, April 2025. Our volunteers in the photo are Elaine Tully, Kara Kalvapalle, and Trish Benne



International Women's Day 2026 - Give To Gain



Women's Institutes donate their time, talents and resources every year to women, children, families and communities across Canada



Women's Institutes ~ 129 Years Strong

International Women's Day 2026 - Give To Gain

On International Women's Day, the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada celebrates women working together to strengthen families, communities, and the nation.

For over a century, our members have shown that giving time, knowledge, and support benefits everyone. Give to Gain reflects our mission: mentoring young leaders, supporting communities, and raising our voices for positive change.

Today, we honor our members' contributions and reaffirm our commitment to sharing skills, building partnerships, and empowering women. When women give, communities and the country thrive.

Lynn McLean, President
Federated Women's Institutes of Canada



Irish Soda Bread, Submitted by Deborah Barrett, President MWI

Ingredients

- 2 1/4 cups of multigrain flour
- 2 1/4 cups of plain white flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 2/3 to 2 cups buttermilk

Directions

1. Pre-heat the oven to 220C/450F.
2. Mix all the dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Make a well in the centre and add the smaller quantity of buttermilk, 1 2/3 cups or 14 fluid ozs.
3. Mix by hand, adding more buttermilk if necessary, until you have a soft but not sticky dough.
4. Turn out onto a floured surface and knead lightly - just enough to shape the dough into a round loaf. Score the top lightly with a knife for a designed top.
5. If you prefer scones, flatten the dough to about 1 inch thick and cut into 8 -10 scones, using a 3-inch plain cutter. (A round water glass makes evenly shaped scones.)
6. Put onto a floured baking tray and bake for about 20 minutes, until well risen and golden. Leave to cool slightly on a wire rack.
7. Serve with soup, stew, or for breakfast.
Delicious warm with butter and honey.



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The Newfoundland Welcome, Submitted by Elizabeth Moss, President WI Newfoundland and Labrador

Looking for hospitality? Say no more, just come to Newfoundland and Labrador.

What is hospitality? A dictionary defines it as “welcoming, receiving, hosting, or entertaining guests with an attitude of openness, respect, and generosity towards those guests.

We must acknowledge the Hospitality Industry, which has evolved for more than a century, born from transporting, nourishing, and housing those who left home to explore, develop, build, expand, and populate the world as we know it.

Here in Newfoundland and Labrador, we took our beautiful landscape for granted, with towering forests, waterfalls, wildlife, indigenous flowers, berries, and more. We also have rugged shorelines and pristine sandy beaches facing the mighty Atlantic Ocean. This was the background of our daily lives. The Hospitality Industry found us, and we have become a desired travel destination for “Come From Aways” to experience all that we have to offer.

However, between you and me, it’s not all the Hoopla associated with the industry. It’s actually a smile, a wave, maybe a hello. My first experience with hospitality was just that, from a total stranger, when I first arrived here decades ago. We give and receive hospitality naturally, sharing and caring, with strangers, friends, family, and colleagues. My advice? “Come where we’re at” and experience it for yourself!



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June Kopy's from the Fisher Branch WI made five quilts for the “Made in MB Project”! The middle quilt is a Fidget Quilt for the PCH residents with Alzheimer’s or dementia. It gives them different activities to keep their hands occupied while keeping them warm with the quilt.

Thank you, June & Fisher Branch WI, for your donations! 😊

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

Clothing and self-image are very closely intertwined. What we wear can significantly affect how we perceive ourselves and how others perceive us.

Fashion trends can often promote unrealistic body standards, resulting in feelings of inadequacy or low self-worth for those who do not fit those standards. It's important to recognize this negative aspect and work towards a healthier self-image.

Society often makes judgments based on clothing choices. Social media and celebrity culture can lead to constant comparisons with others, causing anxiety and dissatisfaction with one's own appearance. This can influence how you are treated in various settings, including work and social situations.

An overemphasis on appearance, focusing too much on clothing, can lead to superficiality, valuing people based on their looks rather than on their personality or abilities.

Negative associations with certain styles and brands can lead to judgements and discrimination based on appearance, affecting social opportunities and self-esteem.

The desire to wear trendy or designer clothes can also create financial stress, leading individuals to overspend or go into debt to maintain a certain image.

It is important to recognize these negative aspects and work towards a healthier self-image that values individuality and self-acceptance, irrespective of social pressures.

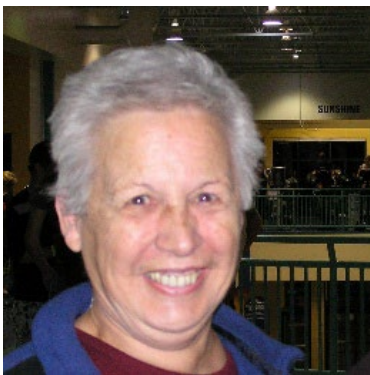
Wearing comfortable clothing makes you feel good in your clothes, and you are likely to carry yourself with more confidence. Finding a balance between comfort and style is essential.

Clothing can often be a great expression of self-identity. It can reflect your interests, personality, and cultural background. Wear what you love, regardless of fashion, and limit your comparisons to others. Celebrate your unique style and body and remind yourself that your worth is not defined by clothing or appearance.

Focus on what makes you happy and confident!

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



Influencers. Who are they? What are they? They seem to pop up everywhere, so I began to wonder how a person becomes one. Can they make a living being one? How does one start and gain followers? I had occasionally wondered about them, but one day I read about a laundry influencer! Really? Although I think I know enough about doing laundry without going to an influencer, it made me curious enough to check out the topic in a little more depth.

Of course, the earliest influencers in most of our lives – and quite possibly long before social media – would have been our parents, grandparents, teachers, friends, and others. Although we may have said we would never say or do that, we tend to find ourselves doing or saying things our parents did, despite saying it was something we would never do! I have a friend who had her 80th birthday last year and still has to clean her house every Monday because that's what her mother did! She admits it's ridiculous but can't help herself. I tell her if she wants to clean a house on a Monday, she can come and do mine. But what I really mean is the influencers you can find are all over social media, rather than those of our childhood.

The internet brings up an incredible amount of information about them, from YouTube videos to several aspects of the subject. One description reads: Becoming an influencer involves choosing a niche, creating consistent, credible content, using visual aids when relevant, engaging your audience, and building a personal brand across

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social media platforms. There is even a 6-week online course on how to become a professional influencer, where companies will advertise on your posts, thereby giving you a source of income.

The most obvious beginning of becoming an influencer obviously involves a huge presence on social media. I even read somewhere that two of the top influencer websites were created by footballers, one apparently with over 8 million followers!

Some of the most common topics seem to be fashion, technology, fitness, finance, parenting, education, gaming, food, beauty, vegan baking, believe it or not, an Amazon influencer and a selfie hunting influencer (not sure how that one works, or the Amazon one for that matter) and probably any other topic you can come up with. I also came across a website listing the top 50 Canadian social media influencers, most of them shown as posting information on the same topics already listed but I would assume with a focus on Canadian content. The top one listed was shown as having more than two million followers and is based in Guelph, Ontario. Can't help wondering if any member in that area knows her and might be able to persuade her to mention Women's Institute in one of her posts.

Better yet, though, maybe WI could become one of those topics – any member out there up for the challenge of becoming a Women's Institute influencer? We, as members, talk about the benefits of being a member so why not let the wider world know about us.

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Fordyce and Dunham Branches (Missisquoi County) joining together for lunch. Our annual event for Founder's Day. Quebec WI



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Do Cheap Clothes Really Cost the Environment? Submitted by Margie Taylor, President of WINS



When we feel good in our clothes, we feel good in our skin, but at what cost? The real cost isn't what we see on the price tag; it's what the planet pays to make that \$10 T-shirt or \$20 dress when we fall victim to fast fashion. It is easy to forget what happens before a T-shirt or dress reaches our online shopping cart or store. The environmental cost of cheap clothing is a significant concern, as the fast fashion industry contributes to pollution, waste, and climate change. The speed and scale of fast fashion make it one of the most environmentally damaging industries in the world.

Why does "cheap" clothing come at such a high cost? The environmental price includes water depletion, chemical pollution, microplastic release in the oceans, mountains of waste, and carbon emissions from energy-intensive production and global transport.

So, remember the next time you go shopping, don't just think about how good you look in your clothes, but think about how good the garment looks and buy with intention, not impulse.

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Drop a toonie (or more) in the jar for the Homestead. Watch Marion's video on YouTube to learn all about it:



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Looking Back, February at the Homestead, Submitted by Veronica Boone



Over the month of February, we hosted a number of exciting events, from Legacy Love Letter workshops with Dr. Michael Williams to a Couples Paint Night with Patti Errygers! Thank you to everyone who came out to support the homestead at these wonderful events, along with our incredible instructors who volunteer their time and talents, making it all possible. In honor of Black History Month, the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead collaborated with the County of Brant to create a video exploring the intersection of traditional 1800's handicraft and abolitionist movements, specifically the Underground Railroad. This video focuses on one of the many unique objects in the museum's collection: an heirloom quilt featuring the "bear paw" or "duck foot" pattern, believed by many to

be among the Quilt Codes used by allies to guide families safely on their passage to the border.

The video can be found on the County of Brant YouTube channel or through the following link:

<https://youtu.be/ZMQYL8MYJKo?si=Gcd4CIWeyXaSOvD->

March Melting at the Adelaide Hoodless Museum: Join us at the homestead this month to "de-thaw" with some cozy crafts, friendly chats, and local history!

Poppies in the Making: Knit & Crochet Workshop (Free Admission)
Saturday, March 14th (12:00 – 3:00 pm)

Join us on March 14th for a meaningful crafting workshop where guests will learn to knit or crochet poppies in honor of Paris Legion Branch 29's 100th anniversary. Whether you're a beginner or experienced maker, your handmade poppies will become a part of this special tribute to our veterans and local history. Guests are asked to please bring knit & crochet tools (5mm) if you have them, along with donations of red and black yarn to keep the poppies coming!

Modern Day Homesteading: The Art of Card Making (\$15.00 registration)
Saturday, March 21st (2:00 – 4:00 pm)

Step back in time and explore the beautiful traditions of handmade correspondence. Participants will learn about the history and symbolism behind Victorian motifs—such as flowers, lace, and embossed details—before creating their own handcrafted card using period-inspired materials and techniques.



Perfect for adults and older children alike, this workshop blends history, creativity, and craftsmanship. All materials are provided, and no prior experience is necessary. Leave with a unique keepsake and a deeper appreciation for the artistry and personal touch of Victorian communication.

To register for our events, book a tour, or inquire about rentals, just contact the homestead!

(519) 448 3873 or info@adelaidehoodless.ca

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WI Day... It was WI Day on Thursday, February 19, 2026, a day when members of Women's Institute branches from across Pictou County gathered to celebrate WI by sharing in lunch together at Swiss Chalet in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. Each member was asked to bring donations for the Tearmann Society for Abused Women, and the first picture shows how generous the members were.



L-R: Pictou District executive members Debbie White, Lorraine Blakeney, and Christine MacKenzie, presenting donated items from Pictou District Women's Institute to Nicki Braniff of the Tearmann Society for Abused Women in Nova Scotia

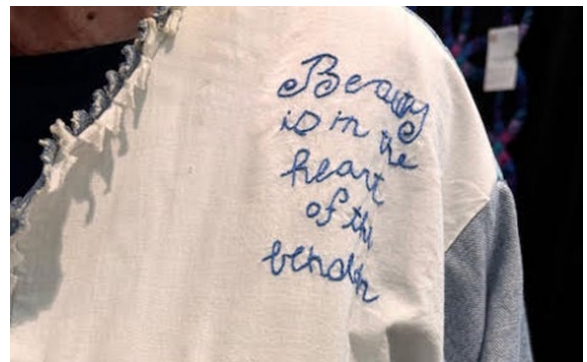
L-R: Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia President Margie Taylor, Pictou District WI President Christine MacKenzie, and Federated Women's Institutes of Canada President Lynn MacLean, with a cake to celebrate WI Day on Feb 19, 2026.



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Upcycling with old pillowcases & jeans

Donna Jebb, FWIO



March 2026

Home Economics News & Views, Submitted by Ann Mandziuk, PHEc, MWI

The food choices we make today shape the health and well-being of generations to come. Nutrition in the earliest years of life provides the foundation for growth, learning, and resilience, while food habits across the life course determine how communities age, how families thrive, and how societies meet the challenges of tomorrow.

The 2026 theme highlights the critical importance of infant and child nutrition as the cornerstone of a healthy future. At the same time, “feeding the future” speaks to the needs of societies with aging populations, where nutrition is essential to sustaining quality of life, independence, and dignity in later years. Across every region, food security, cultural traditions, and sustainable practices in food production and preparation link individual well-being to the collective health of communities.

Home Economics professionals are uniquely positioned to address these challenges. Whether through research, education, or practical action in households and communities, our field connects the science of nutrition with everyday practice. By promoting healthy diets, supporting families in making informed food choices, and advancing sustainable food systems, Home Economists help ensure that the future we are feeding is one of equity, vitality, and care for both people and the planet.





Aloe based Skincare,
Bodycare & Makeup



For centuries, aloe has been a known healer for our skin.

Rumor has it even Cleopatra used it!

But, it's more than just a healer.

*Aloe can help unclog pores and soften skin *Aloe is incredibly moisturizing

*Aloe has the ability to gently exfoliate, penetrate deep into the skin and take other ingredients with it....it's known to penetrate the skin faster than water does!

*Aloe can speed up cell regeneration, making it a great healer *Aloe is rich in Vitamin C, E and beta-carotene, which makes it great for anti-aging (it can help diminish or soften fine lines)

*Aloe has antimicrobial properties and is anti-inflammatory....fantastic for acne *Aloe helps INCREASE the production of collagen in our bodies *Aloe can help in fading dark spots

It gets better! Aloette controls the growth and harvest of our aloe right from the farm to the jar, and has curated their own certified organic aloe, which we call Aloeganic Aloe.

The power of aloe for our bodies is amazing!

reduce redness and irritation.

01

Locks in moisture

02

Supports skin renewal.

03

Rich in Antioxidants

04

Watch for the FWIC Aloette Fundraiser in April 2026.

March 2026

Marie Kenny, ACWW Area Canada President

Greetings Everyone,

I hope this update from ACWW finds you well.

During the month of February, I had the privilege of being invited to two W.I. Founders' Day celebrations. I attended an in-person PEIWI event on 13 February and a virtual event hosted by FWIC/WI Canada on 19 February; both these events were educational and inspiring, extremely well done, with great attendance. Congratulations to President Lynn MacLean, President Carolyn MacFadyen, and board members.



of

The focus theme for United Nations International Women's Day 2026 is: "Rights. Justice. Action. for all Women and Girls," emphasizing the urgent need for equality and justice globally. On March 8, communities around the world will participate in various events, including rallies, forums, and cultural activities, aimed at celebrating women's achievements while addressing the persistent challenges they face. These events serve to raise awareness, foster solidarity, and encourage meaningful action towards achieving gender equality. ACWW will also host two webinars that day. Be sure to check the ACWW website or Facebook page for details on how to register for the webinars.

The United Nations will observe International Women's Day 2026 with a focus on dismantling structural barriers to equal justice, including discriminatory laws and practices. This observance aligns with the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70), which will take place from March 9 to March 19, 2026. CSW provides a platform for member states and civil society to negotiate conclusions on ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls. The UN Calls for collective action to address the legal and social barriers that hinder women's rights. This includes advocating for survivor-centered justice systems, eliminating bias, and ensuring that laws are not only written but actively enforced to protect women's rights. ACWW has a long legacy of amplifying the voices of rural women and girls on this platform. Working together and engaging in pivotal events like IWD and CSW is a powerful way to demand equal rights and justice for all. ACWW's work and network impacts in the millions, when taking into account members of member societies. ACWW has over 280 member societies in over 50 countries around the world, as well as over 900 individual members.

ACWW Triennial World Conference is fast approaching. If you have not registered for the conference, the online registration will open very soon. This is an opportunity to virtually attend all business sessions and to hear the guest speakers.

There will be over 300 individuals in Ottawa at the TWC. There will be delegations from all nine ACWW Areas.

Here are a few fun facts about ACWW Areas including historical facts about ACWW, past projects, and women's empowerment progress at large.

Canada

- Of the 17 total World Presidents of ACWW, ACWW's first world president was a Canadian woman, Madge Watt, who was president from 1933-1947. The second was Dr. Ellen McLean, OC, from 1983 to 1989.
- Canada has hosted the ACWW Triennial Conference three times in its history: 1953 in Toronto, 1983 in Vancouver, and 2001 in Hamilton. The next Triennial Conference will be held in Ottawa in 2026!
- ACWW members in the 1930s were working together to exchange helpful ideas and experiences, send friendly greetings, and sympathize with one another's troubles as well as rejoicing in successes – cross-continental friendship was seen by Canadian members from British Columbia visiting the United Irishwomen's Summer School.

Caribbean, Central & South America

- In 1970, the UN declared the first UN Decade for Women, and the first World Conference on Women was held in Mexico
- In 1979, ACWW's first project was approved to support Home Economics Training in Belize. It would provide women in remote rural settlements with the materials and skills to produce handicrafts and make nutritious meals for their families.

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- The Jamaica Federation of Women, a long-time ACWW member society, celebrated 80 years as an organization in 2024 and regularly partners with other local organizations to promote ACWW resolutions.

Central and South Asia

- In 1960, Sri Lanka became the first country to elect a female Head of government, Sirimavo Bandaranaike.

- Since 1996, the Organization for Community Development (OCD) has been working with indigenous women from the Mukkuvar coastal community in Tamil Nadu, India, to help them generate sustainable sources of income. Partnering with ACWW in 2023, OCD has worked to alleviate some of the strain on 240 women in these villages by providing clean, accessible water through borehole drilling, which enables the construction of overhead water tanks. These will serve 30 houses in each village, reducing the burden of water collection and purifying that falls disproportionately on women.

- In December 2024, Tharindra Arumapperuma, ACWW Area President for Central & South Asia, hosted an online panel discussion on the intersection of climate action and women's empowerment, inviting leading climate activists working across the region to speak on the harsh realities that women in these regions face when it comes to climate change.

East, West, and Central Africa

- In 2003, the civil war in Liberia prompted thousands of Liberian women to form a movement to pressure men to partake in peace talks. The movement was so successful, it ended a 14-year civil war and led to the election of Africa's first woman head of state, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

- In 2020, ACWW delivered a project with Rural Aid Foundation in Mugalama Sub-county, Uganda, with the aim of improving access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights among adolescent girls and young women. In addition to directly engaging 1508 women in the second phase of this project, 548 women were involved in phase one. Because of the innovative combination of face-to-face community engagement and radio shows, the project reached an audience of more than 100,000. Key stakeholders included: Adolescent girls and young women aged 15 to 25 years, traditional birth attendants, health workers, local leaders, including council, cultural, and religious leaders, justice actors, and police officers.

- ACWW Coordinator, Beatrice Banda, from Empowerment for Marginalized Communities in Tanzania, is the Program Manager at her organization. EMAC was funded in 2024 for a Rural Women's Health project, which Beatrice is overseeing. The project aims to increase awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights and increase access to health services.

Europe

- The world's first rural women's organizations were recorded in 1797 in Finland, with the next hundred years seeing similar movements recognized in the USA, Canada, and other nations around the world.

- In 1929, the first ACWW conference was held in London, 24 countries represented, 46 delegates and visitors, chaired by Lady Aberdeen with Countess Keyserlingk and Madge Watt as Vice-Chairman.

- In 1959, at the 9th Triennial Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, the Lady Aberdeen Scholarship Fund was established for training countrywomen and homemakers, especially in rapidly developing countries, and for forging new links of international friendship.

- ACWW has funded the first Rural Women in Action project in Romania! Planting the Seeds of Peace was a 12-month programme designed to develop and implement a practical training course for Ukrainian refugee children centered around the ecological growing of plants and vegetables. The project was implemented in Bucharest, Romania, at a school hosting 200 Ukrainian children.

South East Asia & the Far East

- In 2023, ACWW launched the Women's Empowerment Summit initiative in Khovd, Mongolia, with long-term local partner, Sain Tus Development Bridge NGO. The Women's Empowerment Summit brought together over 300 survivors of domestic and gender-based violence from rural communities and herdswomen.

- In 2023, at the Triennial Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Queen Azizah hosted delegates at the Royal Palace for a Gala dinner and cultural festivities!

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- ACWW Member Society PERWARI in Indonesia is a community organization that carries out its role as a partner of the Government, especially in the field of women's and children's empowerment, health, and social welfare. They collaborate with the Ministry of Women and the Empowerment of Mothers and Children, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Southern Africa

- ACWW delivered a project with Ntengwe for Community Development in Zimbabwe, to support community seed banks as a sustainable way of improving access to high-value seeds, creating viable community-based businesses, and maintaining biodiversity, as well as contributing to farmer adaptation to climate change. This project addressed a broad group of stakeholders and involved 924 people, including: 128 women small holder farmers directly benefitting from the interventions, over 600 attended community platforms and seed fair and seed collection missions, key stakeholders from Agritex, Women's Affairs and Small to Medium Enterprises, Traditional Leaders, and students from Midland State University

- Member society, Women's Agricultural Union Mpumalanga in South Africa, took part in a nationwide project to send boxes of groceries and personal necessities to women in drought-stricken areas. More than 2000 boxes were distributed.

South Pacific

- In 1873, 32,000 signatures were written in a 270-metre-long suffrage petition presented to New Zealand's parliament – soon after New Zealand became the first self-governing nation to allow women to vote and inspired suffragists across the globe.

- In 1962, the 10th Triennial Conference was held in Melbourne, Australia, with 1200 delegates and 1200 other women observers gathered in Melbourne Town Hall.

- Member society, Police Mothers Association in Papua New Guinea, raises awareness about gender-based violence through hosting workshops and educational trainings in the Western Highlands Province of the country. As a very rural society with limited transport options and internet access, they have managed to reach over 30 communities.

United States of America

- In 1848, the first women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York

- In 1936, more than 7,000 American farm women converged on Washington, D.C. for the 3rd ACWW Triennial Conference, the first held outside of Europe. The reception was hosted on the White House lawn by President Franklin D Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

- ACWW Member Society, Women's National Farm & Garden Association, is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting civic gardening, agriculture, and horticulture. They are planning a learning session at the 2025 USA Area Conference on the therapeutic nature of horticulture therapy.

2026 is the International Year of the Woman Farmer. ACWW continues to accept stories of women farmers on a rolling basis to share throughout the year. Stories may be shared in written form, audio, or video, depending on contributors' preferences and access. Guidance and support will be provided throughout the process by Casey Daudelin, ACWW Communication Officer. If you would like to share a story, please email Casey at: casey@acww.org.uk

Thank you for all the work you are doing to enhance the lives of others, locally, nationally, and internationally. I am honored to be your ACWW Area President. If I can be of any assistance to support you, please let me know, email me at: canada@acww.org.uk

Together we are Stronger! Marie Kenny, ACWW Canada Area President.

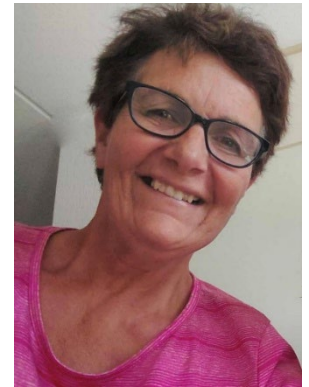
March 2026

Stories to Inspire and Connect Women, Submitted by Moranda van Geest, Elgin WI, NB

The Year of the Woman Farmer

As far back as I can remember, it has always felt like the year of the woman farmer.

When you manage a farm alongside your husband, you are just as much a farmer as he is. The title may not always be spoken out loud, but the work speaks for itself. You live it and breathe it 24/7. Farming is not a job you leave at the end of the day — it is a way of life.



Yes, we do take the occasional vacation, but even that comes with challenges. Finding someone who truly understands the farm — who cares for the animals and carries your workload while you are away — is no small task. Leaving isn't simple. The farm doesn't pause.

And when young children are part of the picture, the stories multiply. Rural areas often don't have childcare, and even if they did, many farm families couldn't afford it. So, when you can't leave a baby, a three-year-old, and a five-year-old alone in the house, they come to the barn.

One runs in circles. Another sits in a playpen in front of the cows. The baby rests in a stroller that moves as Mom moves, milking cow after cow. Day after day. Year after year. Farm children grow up alongside the rhythm of chores. Slowly, they learn to help — small tasks at first, then more responsibility.

There are moments of humor, too. Like the time one child decided to play "doctor" by putting a feed pellet in her ear. That adventure ended in the emergency room, where even the doctor had to laugh. Or the discovery of the hay mow — where children and their friends played "gargoyles," climbing beams and pretending to fly, landing safely (thankfully) in the hay. You usually find out about those games later.

That little girl with the pellet in her ear is now a farmer herself, raising three children on the farm. She is living many of the same experiences. One day, she stepped out of the milk room to feed the calves, only to hear her five-year-old calling from the top of a five-foot stack of pallets. He had climbed up with an armful of straw and proudly announced, "Mom, look! I'm a bird in a nest."

As her children grew old enough to stay inside on their own, she would return from chores to find every pot and pan in the kitchen filled with mud, water, and frogs. A brand-new plastic container might have air holes carefully hacked into it — necessary, of course, for the caterpillars.

During COVID, the farm never slowed down. The work continued as it always had. Parents took turns bringing children along in the tractor — sleeping or awake — day after day.

Farm children grow up resilient and independent. By seven, many can vaccinate calves, start milking cows, feed livestock, and even begin learning to drive tractors and trucks. While other parents worry about car keys, farm parents worry about machinery keys.

Many people never consider these realities when they think about farming. But this — this daily balancing of livestock, land, children, home, and community — is a profound and powerful part of being a woman farmer.

So, here's to the Year of the Woman Farmer.

I know there are countless stories just like these — stories of strength, creativity, resilience, and love lived out in barns and fields across our country. And every one of them matters.



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.**

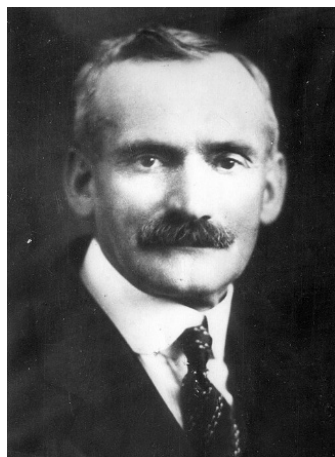


Criteria:

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) 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 1N0



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.**