



# WOMEN ON THE RISE ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

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*Helping mothers to help themselves*



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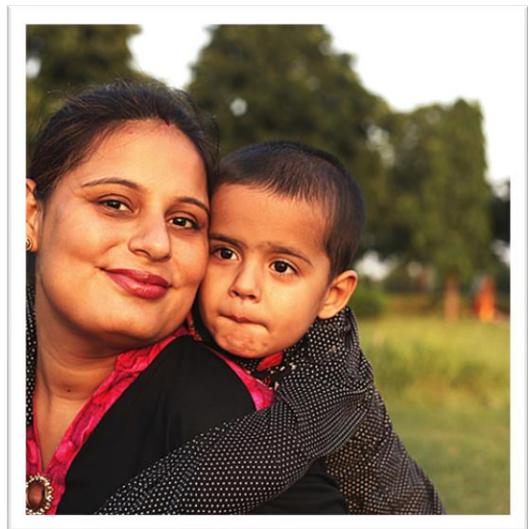
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# Our Mandate

Women on the Rise is a nonprofit organization based in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG) that offers programs and services to mothers and their families. We meet moms where they're at, offering non-judgmental, empowerment-based individual support, group support and resources.

Women on the Rise was created in 1991 by the CLSC-NDG (and incorporated in 1999 as a non-profit) in response to two studies which highlighted the need for services for single parents, new immigrants and families in general.

## ***Our goal is to help mothers to help themselves by:***

- Supporting isolated, low income, new immigrants and single mothers with children between 0-5 years old.
- Empowering, supporting and coaching women in their personal, economic and social development while promoting optimal development of their young children.
- Providing stimulating workshops aimed at promoting self-awareness of one's strengths, potentials & limits, and encouraging decision-making around incorporating healthy life changes.
- Providing opportunities for social networking and peer support among isolated women.
- Providing an educational and bilingual childcare program that enhances all aspects of child development.
- Encouraging parents to adopt a positive and proactive attitude for their children's education and upbringing.
- Providing individual and group counselling, including crisis support.
- Encouraging members to develop an interest and the organizational skills to budget, shop, cook and bake on a low budget.

## Our Staff:

- Grace Campbell, *Executive Director*
- Maria T. Bautista, *Program Coordinator and Food Security Officer*
- Claudia Badolo\*, *Administrative Assistant*
- Lilia Dragomir, *Early Childhood Educator*
- Hannah Stratford-Kurus, *Development Agent and Project Manager*

*\*Outgoing*



*Our talented staff*

## Our Board:

- Michelle Riffin, President
- Keisha Neufeld, VP Finance
- Catherine Oliver, VP Secretary
- Donna Gallup, Administrator
- Michelle Graham, Administrator
- Dahlia Fernandez, Administrator
- Adejoke Olaniyan, Administrator

## Our Advisory Committee:

- Bonnie Soutar
- Halah al-Ubaidi
- Merley Cumberbatch
- Lex Green
- Pat Hardt
- Sylvie Laferrière



*Our fabulous Board of Directors*

# A Message from the Executive Director, Grace Campbell

Women on the Rise has been in existence for 30 years and our fiscal year 2021-2022 was one of the best we have had. It has been quite a roller coaster ride over the past 8 years, and I am very proud to have been part of the process. For sure we had our challenges; however, our highlights this year far exceeded the disputes. Highlights like increases in the areas of core funding, membership and capacity building, coupled with a stronger bond with key affiliates. With the help of federal, provincial and municipal governments, private donors and corporations, we were able to expand, maintain and increase our staff, build stronger and effective programs. We also continue to issue WOR bursaries to deserving elementary students preparing to enter high school.

Despite Covid-19, the staff worked together diligently to keep our operations going during the pandemic, by adjusting re: online activities and more frequent communication with the mothers (we hired an Administrative Assistant who helped greatly with this task). We expanded our office space and staff, whereby the ED was able to move into a private office. As well, the space for our Early Childhood Education Program was expanded by adding one more room. This enabled us to increase the activities for the children, where we could now work on their gross motor skills indoors.

We did face some challenges with the ever-present Covid-19 pandemic, having to remain vigilant and maintain protocols, and train our staff and members on the new ways of conducting our programs. Other challenges included: doing workshops online, increased communication with mothers, training re: emails, etc., ensuring that a full staff was functioning during the pandemic. The mothers gradually became comfortable with the online workshops and increased communication in general; in addition, the support they received from each other in learning the new technology brought them even closer together.

Our new incoming Executive Director, Nadine Collins will be taking over the helm, and I am comforted in the knowledge that WOR will be in good, capable hands. I believe Nadine shares the same passion that has been driving me over the past years and I wait with anticipation to see how the new chapter of WOR will unfold. I will not be present when we enter this new phase, as I have decided to retire after 20 years with this great organization.

My time with WOR has filled me with a sense of purpose and belonging that none other could offer. I am fortunate to have worked so well with our many talented and wonderful staff members and volunteers. Our Board of Directors has been amazing, exhibiting strength, commitment, and integrity, beyond reproach.

Wishing Women on the Rise all the very best, and I look forward to hearing of what new achievements the future has in store for this amazing organization.

Sincerely,

Grace Campbell

# A Message from the Board of Directors

Dear cherished Women on the Rise supporters,

Although we learned a bit from 2020, 2021 was just as confusing as we tried to manage the impact of Covid 19. The one thing that did stay constant was our desire to service our community. Thanks to our wonderful staff and board, we remained committed and focused our efforts on our members. Women on the Rise continued to run programs remotely, and ensured to the best of our ability, that our moms had what they needed to properly take care of their families.

The need for self-care has surfaced amidst the chaos of the pandemic. We continue to see more incidences of mental illness or mental health concerns. In addition, there was a far greater need for food security that pushed us to develop contacts to assist in this area. The needs continue to grow, and Women on the Rise continues to flourish.

As always, our staff worked hard for Women on the Rise. They extend themselves in all circumstances to make sure that everyone was taken care of. We are grateful for each of them.

Our beloved Executive Director, Grace Campbell will retire this year after 20 years of dedicated service to Women on the Rise. Grace has been the face of our organization and has represented us well. She has done amazing things for Women on the Rise over the years and has earned her rest. We thank her for her years of service.

As Grace departs we are blessed to have Nadine Collins as our new Executive Director. Her energy and enthusiasm will serve as motivation to move us forward. We welcome Nadine and look forward to working under her leadership.

Our dedicated Board of Directors continue shine. Their commitment to Women on the Rise is of great value. They are a working board, one that rolls up their sleeves to help and support the organization. Nothing that we accomplished could have been done without them.

Women on the Rise is looking forward, above the horizon, setting our goals in anticipation of the growing needs and we are not leaving anyone behind. We are focused on becoming a Women's Center, which will enable us to evolve in our offerings to the NDG community. The future is bright, and we appreciate the support we have experienced over the last year.

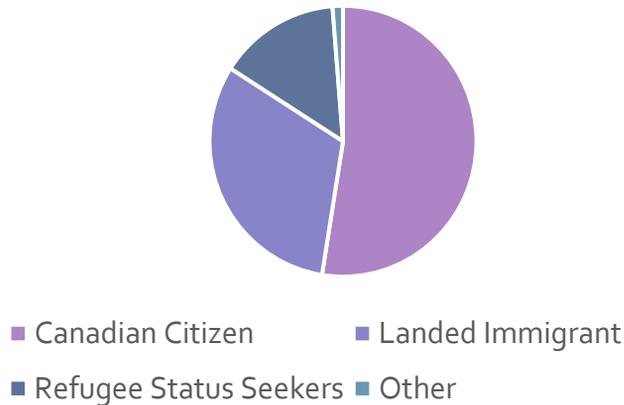
Thank you for attending our AGM. We appreciate you and look forward to your continued support.

Sincerely,

Women on the Rise Board of Directors

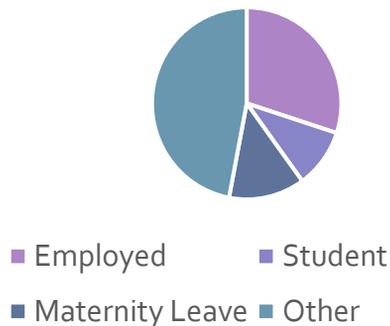
# MEMBERSHIP SNAPSHOT 2021 –

## Immigration Status of Members



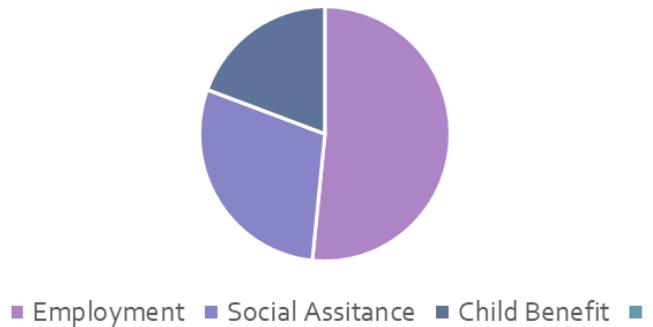
Approximately 50% of our members are Canadian citizens. 30% are landed immigrants, 14% refugee status seekers, 6% 'other'.

## Occupation of Members



Approximately 30% of our members are employed. 10% are students, 3% are on maternity leave, and 47% are 'other' (unemployed or current employment status doesn't fit in these categories).

## Average Sources of Income

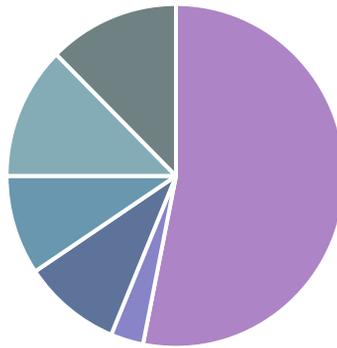


Number of individuals who have asked for more than one service in the past year:

Adults	91
Children	137
Total Individuals	228

Single moms	31
2 parents	30
Total Families	61

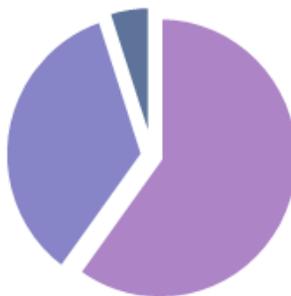
## Members By Neighbourhood



- N.D.G.
- Lachine
- LaSalle
- Côte Saint-Luc
- Montreal-West
- Other Neighbourhoods

The majority of members live in NDG or nearby neighborhoods. In practice, however, there is no territorial boundary for who can access our services.

## Language Preference of Members



- English
- French
- Different language

Approximately 60% of our members prefer services in English, 35% prefer services in French, 5% don't speak either official language.

## Some responses to our question: 'Why do you want to be a member of Women on the Rise?'

"I love the environment, the openness of everyone I've met."

"I want to be a member because they provide a lot of good information to women in need, very helpful and always there to support women."

"Je me sens bien, écoutée, épaulée, l'aide que j'ai reçue c'est beaucoup, je stresse moins."

"To make friends with other mothers."

"I enjoy the environment. The benefits of being a member are always great."

"I appreciate the support services, and opportunity to connect with the mothers"

"Pour avoir des amis et aussi pour savoir qu'est-ce qu'il se passe dans mon entourage."

"Le réseautage, l'entraide et le support entre femmes"

"I like to be a member of Women on the Rise because they help me to be a better person. Self-confidence empowered me to be a better parent better mother and they are always there to help me and my family, I'm so honored to be a member of Women on the Rise. Thank you."

"I find your workshops and seminars very educating."

"J'aime les ateliers d'art et les parenting coaching ainsi que le développement personnel avec Gail."

"Apprendre les conditions de vie au Canada et apprendre aussi à être indépendante en tant que single mother, aussi apprendre pour soutenir cette vision à l'avenir."

"J'ai trouvé l'aide, le soutien, les informations nécessaires, les procédures et les démarches dont j'ai besoin en tant que demandeur d'asile, j'avais des inquiétudes concernant les habits, les fournitures et la nourriture surtout, mais grâce à Women on the Rise je vis tranquillement sans stress."

"I am not working at the moment due to illness and my social worker referred to this organization to socialize and get some help."

"To learn about the community. To contribute to the community. To access resources & information for my family."

"Seminars, respite, food baskets etc. Meeting people in my community."

"I like to be part of an organization devoted to the well-being of women."

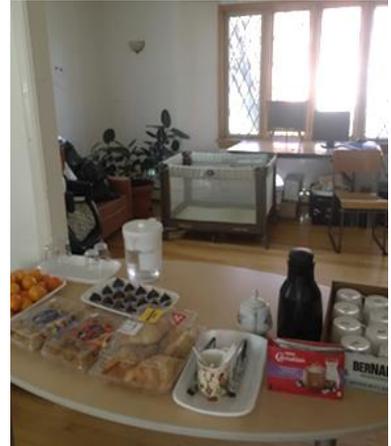
"J'ai toujours voulu être membre d'une association bénévole pour aider les femmes en besoin d'aide et pour recevoir l'aide aussi en cas de besoin."

# Our Programs

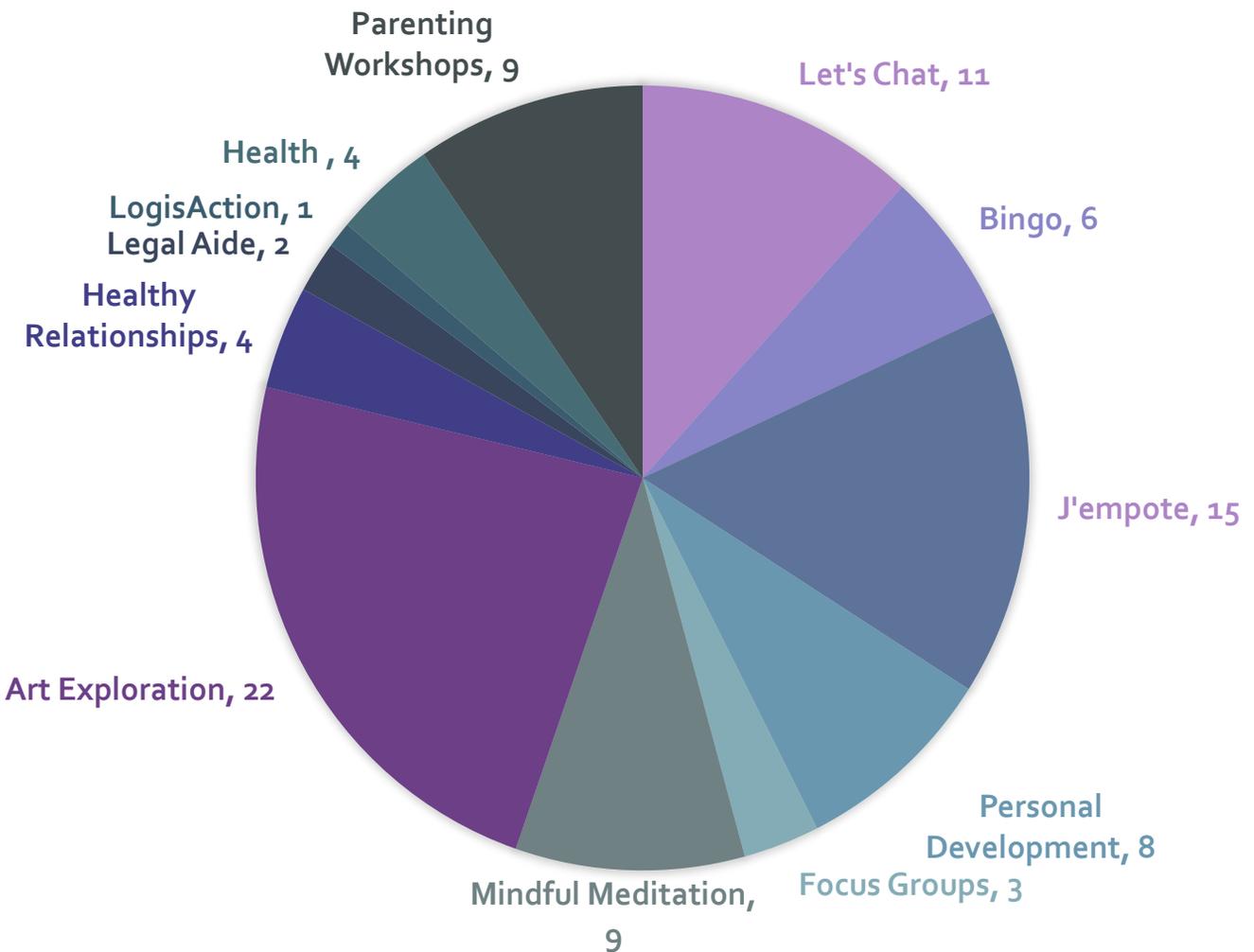
## Parents' Workshops:

We were able to tackle a variety of subjects even during the pandemic. We held both online and in-person workshops. We wanted our mothers to be well informed and have the right information so they would be able to make the best decision for themselves and their families.

In total, we hosted 94 adult workshops in the 2021-2022 year, with an average of 5 participants per session and a combined total of 470 attendees. 64% of the workshops were held online.



## WORKSHOP FREQUENCY

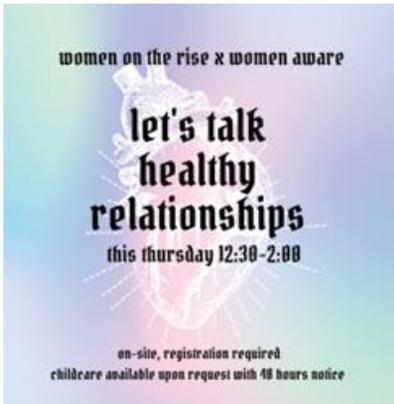


# Programs (continued)



## Some highlights:

We had Dr. Leighanne Parkes, Infectious Disease Specialist who works right in the middle of the COVID action at the Jewish General Hospital. She separated facts from fiction and demystified the vaccine's creation. We were able to help the mothers take care of themselves during these stressful times. As abusive relationships were rising during this time, we collaborated with Women Aware and learned to identify abusive relations and healthy relationships. We continued offering workshops on parenting and the importance of continuing and strengthening their connection to their children by maintaining routine, reading and the importance of playing with their children. We partnered with LogisAction in the fall to host an information session on tenant's rights.



## Legal Aid Workshops:

In the fall, we collaborated with CDN Legal Aid Clinic to host 2 in-person info sessions. The first workshop introduced participants to the services & expertise of the clinic, as well as the procedure and eligibility requirements to access their services. The second session had a narrower focus exploring questions of separation, including child custody, mediation, and divorce processes. We continue to refer members and anyone seeking legal assistance to the clinic regularly.

## Our Programs (continued)

### Mindful Movements & Relaxation

We had adapted our Rhythm & Movement Workshops to Mindful Movements. As the name change suggests, it is slow, deliberate, targeted movements, stretching exercises and mindful relaxation to end the session. These workshops continued online as it was easier for the moms to join the class in the privacy of their homes.



### Gail's Life Coaching - Personal Development:

Participants took a journey of self-discovery, esteem-building, acknowledging one's strengths and challenging preconceived images of oneself. They tackled healthy relationships, effective communication and the use of the 5 languages of love. To close the workshops, they created their own vision board so they can see their dreams in pictures and work towards their goals. This was an 8-session workshop from Jan – Dec. 2021.

### Let's Chat:

An hour where participants talk about issues that are on their minds; any concerns they may have or a pre-chosen topic or information that would be of interest to them. Topics covered are: vaccination hesitation, managing the stress and fear due to COVID, kids going back to school, mask wearing, vaccination misconceptions, etc. We also discussed returning to in-person workshops (in the back garden) and chatting with Grace & Maria about this and that.



## Our Programs (continued)

### Nutrition Counts:

This program continued and was paired with the in-person workshops. Najia Kakar, one of our moms prepared hot meals for 15 participants at her home; packed them and delivered them to the center for the participants to bring home. The hot meal reminded them of what we used to enjoy here at the center.

### Bingo – Fun Activity for the moms:

This was a welcome distraction and entertainment from the ongoing COVID stress. The moms really enjoyed Bingo days. Prizes included perfumes, towel sets, personal blenders, etc. April; May; June (online); July (online); September (in person); Oct (in person).



**J'empote : Food Preservation Methods. (Year 2 of a project on Alleviating Food Insecurity funded by the City of Montreal):** In spite of Covid restrictions we were still able to have four moms participate twice a month during the summer months (4 months) when fresh fruits and vegetables were abundant and affordable from the farmers' markets around Montreal. They learned all the different methods of food preservation such as canning food, freezing, vacuum sealing, fermenting and dehydrating. A trip to Jean-Talon Market was arranged and one mom and her 2 children came and discovered Quebec's summer harvest such as strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, etc. We were also able to introduce new fruits such as ground cherries, green gages and Mirabelle plums, by playing "Guess what this fruit is?" to win the fruit. This activity also made some moms do a quick Google "research" to discover the fruits and their nutritional values

- **Dehydration** - A Dehydrator machine was made available to the moms, who wanted to learn how to dehydrate fruits and vegetables, continue or try out this food preservation technique at home. They were able to borrow it to take home for 3 – 4 weeks.

# Our Programs (continued)

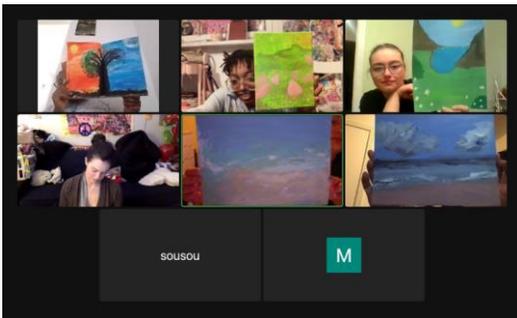
## Art Exploration:

From October to March, our facilitator Kayla Pierre Louis lead participants through weekly art exploration workshops. These sessions were hosted online, covered a range of topics and themes, and ran with an open structure. Themes of the workshop included exploring identity, strengths, emotions, beauty and storytelling. Sessions were always kept lively by trying new mediums, including pastels, collage, journaling, clay, and painting. Participants reported how much they enjoyed the self-directed nature of the sessions, the opportunities to unwind after a long day, and being open to other women in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. In total, there were 22 evening zoom sessions, with a range of 6-12 participants each week. In addition to the weekly online sessions, Kayla hosted a group chat dedicated to sharing inspiration and process work, as well as additional weekly exercise ideas. These elements were complemented by our regular online live videos hosted on Instagram, where Kayla presented on various topics, including the value of journaling, crafting, etc., and answered questions from the live audience. These videos gained a lot of traction online and introduced many people to our organization! They were especially appreciated in the dark days of the winter lockdown, when a friendly face was a welcome sight and an effective way of breaking isolation with our participants and additional viewers.

We are so grateful to Kayla for lending her warmth, creativity, and enthusiasm to this project! Thank you for making art fun and accessible, and for cultivating an environment of support and trust for all participants.

A sample of artwork from this program.

Credits (clockwise from right):  
Kathleen Gyles, Premlata Jowata,  
Amanda Loomis, anonymous.



## Participation in Mobilizations



### Rebekah Love Harry Memorial March:

This year has been a particularly grave year for violence against women. In Quebec alone, there were 18 presumed femicides in 2021. The killing of Rebekah Harry was particularly sobering for many of our members, as she was well-known in the black/anglophone community. Our team believed it was important to attend her memorial rally (April 2021), along with members, friends and families. We joined with others in expressing our grief and outrage during this ongoing crisis. We extend our condolences to the loved ones of Rebekah Harry and to all those who have lost someone by conjugal violence.

### Community Worker Strike:

In a very different expression of solidarity, our team made the decision to participate in the provincial strike wave of community workers in February of 2022. We closed all our services for one day, and took our concerns to the street, advocating with FRACA members and a diverse range of community organizations to demand improved labour standards and increased provincial budget for community workers. It was a great experience to amplify our voice with a larger movement and connect our needs with a bigger social network. Thanks to FRACA and all the organizers who did such a great job communicating the 'whys' and making an accessible event.



# Black History Month Highlights

**Panel Discussion: The Black Futures Panel: Entrepreneurship and Business.** Women on the Rise is a member of the NDG Community Resilience Coalition (NCRC). As part of the Black History Month celebration, NCRC organized a panel discussion with Black entrepreneurs and organizations that lead entrepreneurship programs: Joeline Jean-Claude, Renate Betts, Cassandra Kernisan and Akilah Newton. They discussed best practices, tips, tools and resources for entrepreneurship, mentorship, successes and challenges. The event was presented on Zoom – Sunday March 20/2022 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. The special guest was Mayor Gracia Kasoki Katahwa along with other members of the City of Montreal and other aspiring entrepreneurs – this event was well attended.

In addition, prior to the Zoom event, the members of the NDG Community were asked to participate in a fun Scavenger Hunt Activity for Black History Month, whereby they would discover 10 Black-owned businesses in the community. Taking clues from each place to solve the puzzle got them a chance to win a gift certificate for one of the businesses. This exercise proved to be fun and successful.



## Montreal Canadiens Celebrate Black History Month:

As part of the NHL's Black History Month initiative, our very own Grace Campbell was nominated by the Montreal community and selected as one of two 'Changemakers' by the Montreal Canadiens. Grace was gifted with free tickets to the Canadiens game where she accepted her award, and received a personalized warm up jersey in honour of the event.

**THE BLACK FUTURES PANEL:  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP & BUSINESS**

**Special guest: Mayor Gracia Kasoki Katahwa**

The **NCRC** is hosting a panel to present best practices, tips, tools and resources for entrepreneurship and mentorship.

Black entrepreneurs are invited to join us

On **ZOOM**: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87240293230>

Sunday March 20th 2022 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm

(For info contact: [outreach@depotmtl.org](mailto:outreach@depotmtl.org))

This event is organized by the NCRC: NDG Community Resilience Coalition

Featured Panelists:

- Joeline Jean-Claude  
Director of Branch for Black Entrepreneurs
- Cassandra Kernisan  
Owner: Black Entrepreneur Program
- Renate Betts  
Chief Executive Officer, Black Community Association
- Akilah Newton  
Founder of Queerline with the Arts, awarded author

Funded by: [Logos of funding partners]

## Early Childhood Education/Respite Program

This year the program was running mostly in person, compared to last summer, when we kept the program in a hybrid version ( online and in person sessions ). From April until August, we were able to offer 22 online sessions, each lasting 50 to 60 minutes.

The number of participants on the online activities varied between 3-8 children as well as their mothers. We were able to see the positive effect of online activities, because mothers and their children were able to have fun and at the same time learn from their homes.

We all tried to readapt to the new realities. I am very happy that despite the pandemic, I managed to offer a multitude of activities, which aimed at the harmonious development of children, of course as much as we could afford to do online.

ECE is a unique program offered twice per week for children aged from 2 to 5. The program addresses the needs of the children and mothers in a holistic manner. This year I was able to host in my children's rooms 2 to sometimes 6 children, with different needs. My teaching is based on a personal approach, which encourages curiosity, develops autonomy and exposes the children to the world in a playful manner. They are engaged in different learning opportunities, including bilingual storytelling, and developing their fine motors skills through a multitude of activities such as painting, coloring, cutting with scissors, playdough, and playing various games which allow the children to manipulate the objects with their fingers.

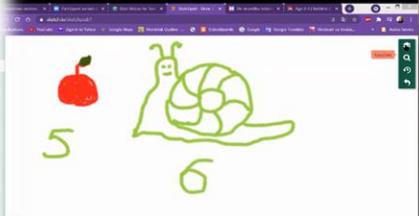
Other activities included:

- Inspiring the children's creativity through arts & crafts activities.
- Developing social skills through sharing and playing in groups, exploring and identifying their emotions.

I would like to share the joy of creating, this year, an additional indoor space for the development of gross motor skills , especially on days when the weather does not allow us to go outside. The room was decorated with slides, tunnels, a mini trampoline, bouncing balls and much more, where children love to play.

And now, after the lengthy pandemic period, we finally can finally start the ECE program in-person again, and we are very happy to meet within our dear WOR family.

Lilia Dragomir, Early Childhood Educator



# Food Security

## Moisson Montreal:

We received 7349 Kg of food from Moisson Montreal with the value of 42,404\$. We made up 397 baskets (from April 2021 – March 2022) for 61 families who regularly took advantage of this service, half of which are single moms. There are 137 children, 91 adults. Of the 61 families who get a basket each month, 31 are single mothers with 3 or 4 children.



## Second Harvest (\$20,000) :

We bought \$10,000 Grocery cards for 35 families not on Lufa Farms' Direct Giving Project and \$10,000 were used as credit from Lufa Farms to 25 Families who are already enjoying the Lufa Farms project. The value ranged from \$ 300 – \$ 500 depending on the size of the family. These cards were given during the holiday season. They were a great help during the festive season.

## Lufa Farms:

50 families are benefitting from the Direct Giving Program, and they have informed us that it is an ongoing project and will be continuing. Jan 2021 to Dec 2021; Jan 2022 until now. 56 Adults and 41 children are enjoying organic fresh fruits and vegetables as well as other products from the project. The total credits used for 2021 was \$91,456.00, with Lufa's contribution at \$18,141.10. 1040 orders were processed for Women On The Rise.



Programme de Soutien  
aux Organismes  
Communautaires



## PSOC Emergency Food Fund:

We received \$ 5000 as emergency Food Funds which we distributed as grocery cards to 50 families to supplement the Moisson Food baskets. We were also able to give the cards to mothers who walked in or emailed that they needed food help.

## Mazon Canada:

We again bought bulk items for 35 moms and their families. Items included halal chicken, salmons, olive oil, cooking oil, breakfast cereals, milk, eggs, fruits, juice. (\$ 3885).



**mazon**  
C A N A D A  
The Jewish Response to Hunger



Fondation du Grand Montréal

## Fondation du Grand Montréal:

We received \$2075 from FGM via the Table 0-5 Cavendish (Measure 3.1) to address infant needs, including diapers, formula, and hygiene products.

# Testimonials for our Food Security Initiatives

Without a doubt 2021-2022 was an extremely challenging year for food security. Reasons for using our food distribution services include low hourly wages, not enough hours; unemployment, recently lost job due to COVID; sickness & medical expenses; and family break-ups. Our team worked tirelessly to access a range of food and funds to support participants during this difficult time.



*"The children...know that there are good and tasty things in there that they love to eat. They can't wait to see what it is. It's always a surprise for them."*

*"Thanks so much for this wonderful help. This will go a long way in my family because we are 6 in number for a single mother like me. Am so grateful. God bless you all."*

*"I would like to send a special thank you Miss Grace, Maria, Lilia and Hannah you have done so much for me and my family... Thank you for the food baskets and diapers for my baby, and the online meetings with all the mothers learning new lifestyle methods and family bonding techniques. I'm so thankful to be a member of Women on the Rise."*

*"The Lufa program has benefited us by giving our kids the chance to try and be exposed to new fruits and vegetables that we would have never bought ourselves whether it was because of price or lack of availability. Having Lufa in our lives has also enabled me for the first time to have a herb and vegetable garden on my balcony giving us additional access to fresh produce and herb. The ability to have better quality has improved our energy levels and increased the ability of my son to concentrate in school. I especially like the teas since it has helped me greatly in winding down after an especially hard day of work and kids."*

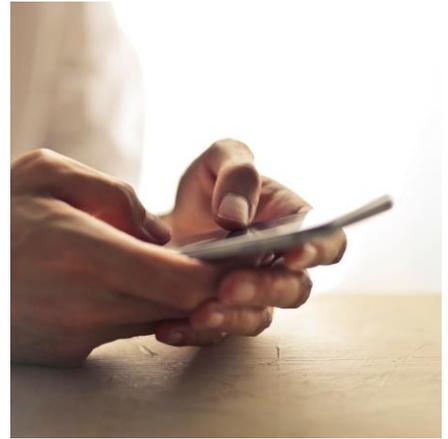
Total MM basket 2021	360
Otis Grant Xmas Food Basket	35
Moisson Montréal Christmas Hamper	40
Trevor Williams Christmas hampers	10
Mazon Canada	35
M.T.O	40
Total	520 baskets

Women who used the food distribution program in the last 12 months (2021):  
 Women – 60  
 New Immigrants – 36/60 (60%)  
 Visible Minority – 48/60 (80%)

## Additional Services

### Wellness Checks :

We continued with our wellness telephone calls/text messages to mothers who needed them. The number of moms has diminished as we returned from online to in-person workshops. Coming together to talk in person, connect and socialize in some way made it a little bit easier for the mothers. The fact of just being able to go out to another place was a stress reliever.



### Referrals & Advocacy:

Referrals continue to be a very significant service to women across Montreal, especially to anglophones and new arrivals to the province. Often, we are the first point of contact for women searching for resources in Montreal using English search engines, and the implication is that our team is responsible for ensuring that callers are provided with a relevant list of bilingual or multilingual resources. We take pride in our thorough exploration of resources, and the relationships that we have cultivated with our community partners. Following up with callers is often necessary, and we do everything that we can to help isolated women have the information they need to engage with the larger social service network that Montreal has to offer. Sometimes, this means contacting other service providers directly to ensure that callers are getting the support they need and advocating for the rights of our members and callers if they report offensive or inadequate service at other institutions. We work with other organizations to advocate for best practices and offer pragmatic approaches to offering accessible services. In addition to referring women to other community organizations, we work in conversation with our CLSC, local schools, daycares and Child Protection Services (DPJ) on a regular basis.

*"I want to thank the team of Women On The Rise to have offered me this beautiful opportunity which helped me solve a particularly delicate problem. This help has therefore been beneficial and important for me, both morally and psychologically. Thank you infinitely."*

*-WOR Member*



### Library:

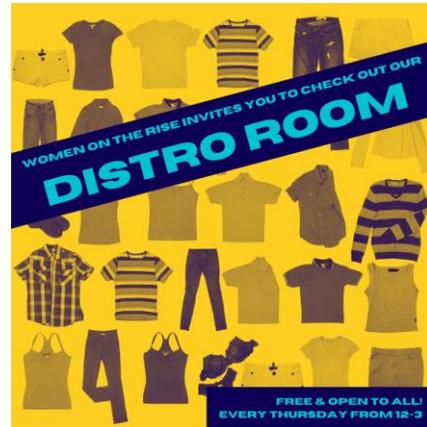
This spring we launched a fledgling lending library for all members and the wider public. The books focus on immigration, women's experiences and feminism, health, policy, advocacy. It also offers a wide selection of cookbooks for all skill levels. Other books have been collected from community members and set up in our new (donated) bookshelves! We look forward to building this library in the years to come and keeping the selection fresh and diverse.

### WhatsApp Group:

Our WhatsApp group that started during the first year of the pandemic continues to be active. It's an easy way for members to stay in touch, send words of encouragement, and share what's on their mind. The platform continues to be used to share updates about community events, local news and morning greetings!

### Distro Room:

Our distro-room has continued to be a treasure-trove for growing families. Thanks to the hard work of two particularly dedicated volunteers, Chantal Pilon and Roxanne Gill, this free-boutique provides clothing, footwear and outerwear for women, children, and babies; as well as diapers, pads and tampons when available. We had over 100 visits to this space, which is open to members and the general public. Thanks to our community who continue to donate their lightly used items to this end!



### Snowsuit Drive:

This year, we made the decision to scale-up our second annual snowsuit drive to collect and distribute more winter items than we could have ever done single-handedly. With the collaboration of Bienvenue NDG, Walkley Centre, Comité Jeunesse N.D.G.- St-Raymond Centre, and Maison Mosaik, we received hundreds of items from donors, and provided winter gear to an estimated 80 families. This was a true team effort!

### Summer Camp Referrals:

Trevor Williams Basketball Camp went ahead this year. Twenty children from age 6 – 18 years were able to attend the 7-week camp, free of charge, in 4 different school gyms.

Arts Camp by Museum of Fine Arts Montreal did not happen again last year as COVID restrictions were still in place for museums. However, they were generous and kind to send us 20 Art Kits that we distributed to kids from 8 – 13 years old. They benefitted from the art activity they could do at home while everyone was in lockdown.

Explorations Summer Camp – 3 kids were given the opportunity to attend the School of Rock and Musical Theater for 2 weeks. They thoroughly enjoyed the experience and there was even an end of camp show for the parents to attend.



## WOR Bursary 2021

Two girls qualified and received the \$ 500 WOR Bursary for 2021. They talked about the challenges they had faced and how they overcame them. Domero Grace Omoigbedi told us about how having to move a lot to different countries in her short life made making friends a challenge. Her family crossed the US/Canada border in 2017. She wrote that as soon as she had made a friend in the new place, she would find out that her family had to move again, leave her new friend, and start the process all over again. In fact, this was what happened later that summer, her family moved to another province. We mailed her bursary and certificate to her new residence in Ottawa. Kessira Sangare received her bursary and certificate here at the Center. In her composition, she wrote that adversity is part of life and is everywhere but having self-confidence and resilience are a sure way to overcome and face these challenges. For her and her family, it was what helped during the COVID lockdown.



Above: Kessira Sangare receiving her award.

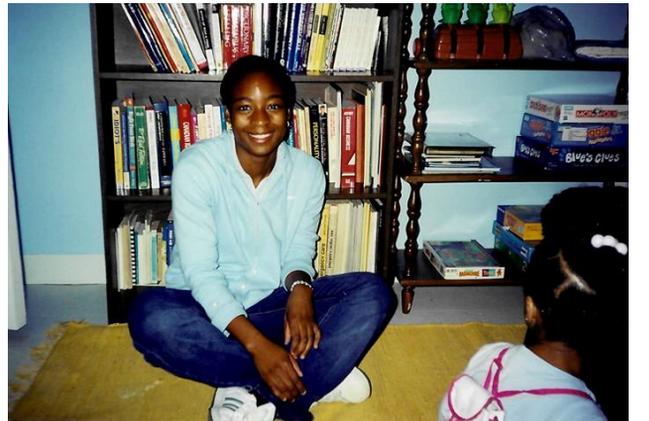
Right: Grace accepting the award on behalf of Domero Grace Omoigbedi

## 30-Year Anniversary Storytelling Project:

Between September 2021 and April 2022, we were fortunate to collaborate with two interns from Concordia University who helped us develop our 30-year anniversary campaign. Both students in Communications, Francesca Mourad and Gabrielle Vendette, worked diligently to craft a multi-platform communications campaign, based on interviews with alumni members, staff, and supporters, in addition to referring to archival material. Working with Gabrielle and Francesca was a gift that afforded us the time to reconnect with old friends, walk down memory lane, uncover new stories, and ultimately recognize the legacy of WOR and the scope of our impact over the years. This project was funded by the amazing people at Concordia's SHIFT Centre for Social Transformation, who supported both staff and interns throughout this process with guidance, tools, and check-ins. Profound thank you to Gabrielle, Francesca, everyone at SHIFT, and everyone who took the time to share their memories with us for this project!



Above right:  
Our talented interns, Francesca Mourad and Gabrielle Vendette  
Left, and following page:  
Some beautiful moments from our 30 years of operation!



# Capacity Building Project Summary

At the end of March 2021, we wrapped up our third year of our 4-year project with WAGE (Women and Gender Equality) dedicated to Capacity Building- and what a year it was! As development agent and project manager of our grant, my role is to work with staff, board, and other stakeholders to reflect on current practices and work towards enhancing our organization's sustainability. Some highlights from the past year include:

## Trainings:

In collaboration with the NDG Community Resilience Coalition, WOR cohosted training for local community workers on:

- o Indigenous Experiences and Colonial Context
- o Cultural Safety and Empowerment: Working with Muslim Women and Families
- o Gender and Sexual Orientation Inclusivity

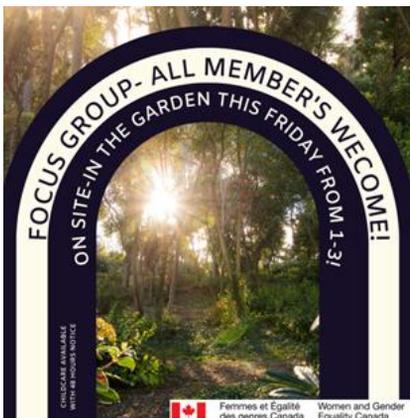
## Reflections and Focus Groups:

We hosted a board orientation & reflection retreat in June 2021. This was a great event that welcomed our 3 newest board members onto our amazing team! We reviewed the challenges born out of the first year of the pandemic, reviewed our membership and program criteria, and affirmed our commitment to become a women's center.

Focus groups with participant members, hosted in August and November 2021, were dynamic and well-attended conversations. We used these events as opportunities to share updates related to expanding our membership and mandate, and to get feedback. Thanks for the encouragement, everyone!

## Staff Support:

Meeting themes explored programming & evaluation, membership, women's center criteria, and the importance of developing a mobilizing branch. We explored how vital our role as a source of referrals really is, and we connected with many community partners to better understand the variety of services offered.



A poster for a summer focus group (left).

Our staff at a visit to Femmes du Monde in the fall (right).



**FUNDRAISING:**

We have had the privilege of working with Bonnie Soutar in reviewing and developing our fundraising strategies. This was exemplified last year during our very successful Mother’s Day fundraising campaign, but the reality is that there was much additional work for staff and board happening behind the scenes! Thank you to all who supported this initiative and contribute to our mission year-round!

*Women on the Rise presents:*  
**Stories of Gratitude**  
This Mother’s Day, send a gift with impact:  
Dedicate a donation and share a story about  
the strong women who have shaped you.  
Your contributions will provide programming  
for local mothers that build skills, confidence,  
and friendships!



*For details, visit our CanadaHelps page at [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org)  
6897 ave Somerled, H4V1V2 Tel. 514-485-7814*

**CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE!!!  
DÉCOUVREZ NOTRE NOUVEAU  
SITE INTERNET!!!**



**WWW.WOMENONTRISE.CA**



**COMMUNICATIONS:**

We are so pleased to have transformed our website to reflect our vision so beautifully! This was a process like anything else and involved much reflection to distill our message. Part of my role was to support our 2 communication interns from Concordia University, who did such a wonderful job in their story telling series to celebrate our 30-year anniversary. Gabrielle and Francesca also lent their insight into an analysis of our communication strategies, including newsletters, social media, and website.

**SUMMARY:**

There is no question it’s been a difficult year for all of us. As a team, we have adapted deftly to offering whatever is within our mandate to fulfill and have leaned on the strength of our community partners to help share the load! We are so grateful to have had this Capacity Building project during such a transitional period, it has afforded us a platform to take the time we need to reflect, recalibrate, and strategize. Looking ahead, we will be undertaking a scaling plan with external support beginning in Fall 2022, and we can’t wait!

-Hannah Stratford-Kurus

This year was a big year for collaboration and exchange. We gratefully acknowledge the leadership involved in these community initiatives:



### 2021-2022 Tables, Committees:

- Board of Directors Table NDG
- Quartiers alliés pour les relations saines
- NDG Community Council Roundtable
- Food Security Coalition
- NDG Community Resilience Coalition
- NDG Community Strategic Planning Committee
- Social Justice Initiative (NDG table)
- SHIFT Centre for Social Transformation (Concordia)
- Table 0-5 NDG
- Féministes pour le droit à la ville (previously named Table des Groupes de femmes Regional Committee (TGFM DLR))



### Quartiers alliés pour les relations saines:

Since October 2021, we have been collaborating with several groups in Côtés-des-Neiges, including Femmes du Monde, to develop an awareness campaign expanding on the more subtle modes of violence against women. Through regular planning sessions, our team created 3 narratives portraying examples of technological, psychological, and economic violence. These narratives had their own storylines and visuals to enable viewers to connect with these very real-life examples. This campaign goes public this spring and will make appearances in the metro stations of CDN-NDG, as well as through various outreach at community events over the summer months. Keep an eye out for us at festivals in the neighborhood this summer!



## Community and Business Partners:

Bienvenue NDG  
CIUSSS de l'ouest-de-l'île-de-Montréal  
COCO Montreal  
Comité Jeunesse NDG  
Depot NDG  
Divine Lashes  
Explorations Education Centre  
Femmes du Monde  
Khalsa Aid  
Legal Aid Clinic of CDN-NDG  
LogisAction NDG  
Lufa Farms  
La Maison Grise  
Maison Mozaik  
Médecins du Monde (Doctors of the World)  
Moisson Montreal  
Mount Royal United Church  
Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal  
NDG Community Council  
Otis Grant Foundation  
Pharmaprix Ann Labrecque  
Quebec Board of Black Educators Inc.  
St Raymond's Centre  
St Thomas Anglican Church  
Trevor Williams Foundation  
UPS Canada  
Walkley Centre  
WomenAWARE



### Volunteers:

Our volunteers make all the difference in the essential services we offer. Thank you to Jabar Griffith, Ron Watson, Elisa Bonnet, Junessa Duka, and Ana Anghelache for bringing your can-do attitude with you to our monthly Moisson Food Baskets. Thanks to Chantal Pilon and Roxanne Gill for your leadership in organizing our Distro Room and for its reliable maintenance - this is a big task!

A big thank you goes out to Kayren Campbell, who has lent a hand in all areas of our operations, including administrative tasks and running pick-ups and deliveries for us (especially crucial during the winter months of lock-down). In reality, your hard work goes beyond these tasks and is more about your unfailing moral support and acts of kindness every day. Kayren, your dedication is unparalleled and we have been so fortunate to have you on our team!



# Back to School, Technology, Women's Day & Holiday Cheer Donations

We would like to thank our generous donors who made the 2021 holiday season one of the most memorable. Christmas toys and gifts cards were plentiful for children from 6 months up to 20 years old. No one was forgotten, even the single mothers received a caring package!

Lia Caltagirone & Family	Carolyn's Toy Drive	63 Children's Toys (<1 - 12 yrs)
Sharon & Friends	Private Individual	78 Children's Toys
Trevor Williams	Trevor Williams Kids Foundation	10 Christmas Food Baskets
Otis Grant	Otis Grant Foundation	35 Food Baskets + \$ 2000 gift cards
UPS Employees	Collective Group	Canned Goods and Specialty Items
The Gazette Christmas Fund		Gift Cheques for 10 Families
Gillian Pesner	Private Individual	School Supplies, educational games, diapers of all sizes, feminine products
Khalsa Aid	Charity Group	Adult and children's winter clothing & socks
Laura Bobeck & Friends	Private Individuals	35 care purses for Mother's day/International Women's Day
M.T.O.	Group	40 food hampers & masks



Right:  
Daniel,  
Grace  
and  
Laura with  
purses  
filled with  
care items  
for  
Women's  
Day



WE GAVE 5 TABLETS to members in need, courtesy of a private donation. Since the beginning of the pandemic, one of our main concerns was staying connected with the mothers during the lockdown. Through the generosity of a private donor, five moms received a new Samsung Tablet so that they were able to join our workshops and remain closely connected to the community. There was a learning curve, as usual in its use and connecting to us through zoom, but the moms learned to overcome it through their children's help and careful instructions. "We can't hear you; your microphone is turned off!" with hand gestures "Turn on your camera, we can't see you!" and lots of laughter. An older mom adapted and learned how to use the device on her own by trial and error.



Women on the Rise would like to thank our individual donors for their generous contribution to the success and community led initiatives of WOR. There are too many to name, however, the impact that each of you have made is greatly appreciated and recognized.

Women on the Rise gratefully acknowledges the support of our funders:



Femmes et Égalité  
des genres Canada

Women and Gender  
Equality Canada

Programme de Soutien  
aux Organismes  
Communautaires

Québec 

Montréal 

LA FONDATION  
**TENAQUIP**  
FOUNDATION



**ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE**  
QUÉBEC

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