

WAVE

Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton

Connecting and Collaborating with our Community





MESSAGE FROM WAVE CHAIR, SANDRA WOITAS

As I reflect on the past year, I'm reminded of a beautiful children's book "Teacup" by Rebecca Young and Matt Ottley. The child in the book learns that every journey requires a traveller and a little bit of hope. It's our collective experience as members of WAVE that we realize some days shine bright, others are cloudy, and some days things can change with a suggestion, a comment, or a criticism. We view criticism as a gift and some days a small seed can grow into something glorious like our review of Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) which has resulted in gender training for key City of Edmonton staff and City Council.

WAVE achieved many exciting and new accomplishments this past year and continues to make a difference for women in Edmonton.

It's been a tremendous year of learning and growth for the WAVE committee. We reached out and heard from approximately 1,000 women about what matters most to them, and we're creating change by providing input on policy changes and other needs within the City of Edmonton.

We continue to believe, as WAVE members, that our network is our estate and by leveraging each of our networks, we add value to our work by encouraging all women to realize they are leaders. As we focused on community engagement this year, we heard from diverse groups of women throughout Edmonton. Displays and presentations were provided by WAVE at numerous community events to learn more about Edmonton women's needs and interests, and increase their awareness about WAVE. In addition to the broad range of groups WAVE engaged with, we also partnered with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, City of Edmonton Multicultural Relations Office, Indo-Canadian Women's Association, Changing Together Centre for Immigrant Women, and the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women with the Diverse Voices for Change program to increase the representation of racialized, newcomer, and Indigenous women in leadership roles. The outcomes of this work are still unfolding, and it was a fantastic approach to partnership with many organizations and women. New friendships and connections were formed.

Leadership was another important focus for WAVE this year. Leadership is all about action, not position; realising that we can all be leaders. Work focused on encouraging more women to lead, recognizing their skills and providing support and guidance to women. WAVE partnered with Equal Voice to provide workshops and connect with the community. The Women's Initiative coordinated Opening the Potential: Women Leading in Edmonton. A cohort of 52 women completed the program and several have expressed they will be running in the 2017 election with many more interested in working on campaigns and other leadership opportunities.

Edmonton's first Quality of Life Scorecard was released in January to share knowledge about how women in Edmonton are doing, track change over time and support initiatives to address their needs.

As the year concludes, I'd like to thank our outgoing members: Claudette Rain, Cristina Stasia, Dawn Newton, Meheret Worku, Mia Norrie, Philomena Okeke-Ihejirika for their significant contributions to WAVE and women in Edmonton. I'm pleased to welcome new members and excited about the work ahead. We look forward to supporting more women to become involved in a wide range leadership positions, supporting GBA+ training for key City staff, continuing to hear from women in Edmonton and the hosting the next Women's Symposium in early 2018.

There is a saying "Knowing trees, I understand the meaning of patience. Knowing grass, I can appreciate persistence." We continue to be diligent in doing what will make the biggest impact in our work with women and families. As Chair of WAVE, I'll continue to influence, grow continuously and serve with humility.

Sandra Woitas, Chair

Who Is WAVE?

WAVE is comprised of 15 community volunteers from diverse backgrounds and experiences to provide City Council with advice on affairs relevant to municipal jurisdiction. In February 2014, the Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton Committee Bylaw was approved by City Council and the WAVE Committee was formally established in spring 2014.



Our Mandate is to:

- » make recommendations to Council about women's gender-based issues and opportunities in relation to Council policies, priorities, and decisions;
- » promote leadership to empower Edmonton women to fully participate in civic life; and
- » research and provide information on resources about women's gender-based issues and opportunities in Edmonton.

WAVE DIRECTLY SUPPORTS EDMONTON'S WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

Edmonton's Women's Initiative is a City of Edmonton initiative, supported and endorsed by City Council, which fosters and promotes equality, opportunity, access to services, justice and inclusion for women in Edmonton. Among the first of its kind in Canada, it is helping to ensure the unique perspectives of women and girls are included in the conversations that shape the city.

WAVE and Women@theCity are the two key pillars under City Council's Women Initiative. WAVE is a community-based committee and Women@theCity is a committee of City staff.



COUNCILLOR BEV ESSLINGER

“WAVE is doing great work in our community. They are out and about in the community, engaging on a personal level. WAVE has also developed a strong reputation for providing quality input on Council policy. I’m proud of the work being done by WAVE. ”

WHY WAVE AND THE WOMEN’S INITIATIVE ARE IMPORTANT FOR OUR COMMUNITY:

WAVE and the Women’s Initiative significantly contribute to the struggle to eliminate systemic inequalities in Edmonton through participation in public decision-making. Gender is socially and culturally ingrained. It impacts both men and women, is a crucial marker of social inequality and an indicator of social progress that intersects with other social categories such as race, class, ability, sexual orientation, etc.

Gender inequity is a complex system of personal and social relations of domination and power through which women and men experience different access to power and material resources.

The gender lens provides the critical “spectacles” to bring things to focus. Through one lens of the spectacles, you see the participation, needs and realities of women. Through the other lens, you see the participation, needs and realities of men. By adopting a gender lens, WAVE seeks to address the gender inequities women experience and highlight the importance of women’s contributions. Empowering women is important work that appreciates the crucial roles women play within and outside the family.



OUR DEDICATED WAVE TEAM FOR THE TERM 2016-2017

Sandra Woitas (chair), Meghana Valupadas (vice chair), Angelica Hernandez, Claudette Rain, Cristina Stasia, Dawn Newton, Debra Jakubec, Dilara Yegani, Elyssa Teslyk, Hersharon Sandhu, Jennifer Jennex, Joyce LaBriola, Meheret Worku, Mia Norrie and Philomena Okeke-Ihejirika.

Thanks to outgoing members Claudette Rain, Cristina Stasia, Dawn Newton, Meheret Worku, Mia Norrie, Philomena Okeke-Ihejirika for their valuable contributions.

Congratulations and welcome to new members Bailey Dawn Coty, Tanya Marie Edison, Beatrice Ghattuba, Dunia Nur and Carrie Lynn Vos who joined WAVE in May 2017. There were 98 applications for the vacant positions.

City Council Sponsors

Mayor Don Iveson
Councillor Bev Esslinger

Women's Initiative Project Support Team

Marian Bruin
Kaylin Betteridge
Brenda Wong

What WAVE Accomplished in Year 3

1. WAVE'S STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2016, WAVE completed a three-year Strategic Plan and the annual work plan was finalized.

Six goals were identified:

- GOAL 1:** We will apply an intersectional gender lens to policy and issues and provide recommendations to City Council and City Departments.
- GOAL 2:** We will promote leadership opportunities for women.
- GOAL 3:** We will communicate to and engage with Edmontonians on issues related to women's issues.
- GOAL 4:** We will see an increase in the number of women running for City Council.
- GOAL 5:** We will gather and analyse research to ensure decisions are evidence based.
- GOAL 6:** We will employ best governance and organizational practises in our work.

Four ongoing WAVE Working Groups were established to implement the workplan: Executive, Engagement, Leadership and Policy.

With the upcoming municipal election in fall 2017, a decision was made to and increase engagement in 2017 and delay the next Women's Symposium until early 2018.

2. WAVE'S WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

WAVE's online presence continues to grow. In fall 2015, WAVE and Women in the community began writing blog posts for the Women's Initiative website, contributing to eight blogs posts on a variety of topics from leadership, local politics, to body image and transit safety. Blog contributors included WAVE members, Red Deer's Mayor Tara Veer, Morinville's Mayor Lisa Holmes and SkirtsAFire Coordinator Annette Losielle.

10,178



2,670



Social media engagements continue to grow rapidly with almost 10,000 followers on Facebook. In 2016 and 2017, there was an average monthly reach of 70,000 people and 2,500 to 3,000 likes, comments and shares.

Facebook is the primary platform for discussion, and the community has matured to the point where WAVE can primarily act as moderator and champion, with the community taking on a very active role. WAVE has connected with like-minded ambassadors and encouraged a community willing to assist with shifting attitudes in our city.

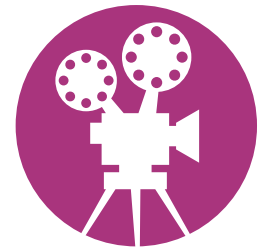
Twitter continues to be active for engagements with 2,670 followers, an average monthly reach of 50,000 people and average monthly of 500 favourites and retweets. WAVE has success using this platform primarily as a good news-sharing mechanism, as well as to amplify the role of like-minded ambassadors in Edmonton.

3. GENDER LENS ON CITY POLICIES AND GBA+ TRAINING

The three policy areas selected this year to support WAVE's mandate of recommending women's gender-based issues and opportunities to Council are Public Involvement; Agencies, Committees and Boards; and Council Orientation/Training.

The Policy Committee made significant progress in regards to *Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) training*. All WAVE members completed training and obtained GBA+ Certification. WAVE successfully encouraged and recommended that the City of Edmonton integrate GBA+ training and certification as mandatory training for all management and key staff involved with creating policies and programs, as well as including elements of GBA+ training as part of the diversity and inclusion training that all staff complete. GBA+ Training for key City staff and City Council was approved by City Council's Executive Committee on April 4, 2017.

The Policy working group has reviewed Council Orientation and Agencies, Boards and Commissions policies.



ALTERNATE OUTREACH

Two short videos were developed to explain why Edmonton has a Women's Initiative and a Feminism 101 course. They were well received and are available as a resource to share with people who may not be familiar with why Edmonton needs this work and what

4. WAVE AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

In 2016/2017, the Opening the Potential, Women Leading in Edmonton, pilot program narrowed their focus from overall leadership for Edmonton women to the upcoming 2017 Municipal Election. WAVE strongly believes in supporting women - whether it's running for Council, supporting others as a campaign manager, voting or are simply hoping to run in the near future. Echoing the sentiment expressed by Alberta Status of Women and Equal Voice alike, WAVE advocates for an increase in female leadership. The municipal election serves as a starting point to affect the intersectional visibility of Edmontonian women in leadership positions.

The mandate for the Opening the Potential, Women Leading in Edmonton became to "promote leadership development to empower Edmonton women to fully participate in civic life." To focus on the goal of increasing women's participation in the 2017 election by running, voting or actively campaigning, WAVE developed a plan to guide the work.

WAVE has attended and assisted at numerous workshops, symposiums and school presentations to provide additional resource information and fill gaps. These events included:

- » Women March Forward: Human Library Panel
- » Women and Politics Panel by Status of Women
- » Diverse Voices Workshop with ICWA and IAAW
- » Opening the Potential: Women Leading in Edmonton

Another important achievement was the creation of a Central Resource Hub on the website about Alberta's Election Process for anyone wanting to run, be a campaign manager, or vote. This content has now been consolidated and provides easier access to information and resources from various organizations.

A universal calendar was created for leadership events or workshops being held for women in Edmonton. This information is regularly tweeted to garner more interest in these events.



5. WAVE WAS ACTIVE AND HEARD IN THE COMMUNITY

To reach out to groups and people not typically reached through social media, WAVE and the Women's Initiative engaged with Indigenous teens and women, partnered with the EMCN and City Hall School, and met with new groups and communities as identified in the work plan.

Other presentations included:

- » I-WIN (Immigrant Women's Integration Network) at the Edmonton Mennonite Center for Newcomers (May 2016)
- » Indo-Canadian Women's Association (October 2016)
- » Changing Together Centre for Immigrant Women (October 2016)
- » Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (October 2016)
- » Edmonton Youth Council (August 2016)
- » Daughters Day (August 2016)
- » Alberta Urban Municipality Association Conference (September 2016)
- » Edmonton Chapter of the Canadian Federation of University Women (October 2016)
- » Alberta's Student Sustainability Summit (U of A, January 22, 2017)
- » Equal Voice Municipal Campaign School (February 2017)
- » NAIT (February 2017)
- » LEAF (Women's Legal Information and Action Fund) (April 2017)



A variety of organizations presented at WAVE Committee meetings where women's needs, interests and potential collaborative

opportunities were discussed. Groups included: Postpartum Progress Warrior Mom® Ambassador Program, Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership, Alberta Status of Women, Equal Voice, Infill Policy, GBA+, Edmonton Police Services, NAIT - WITT program and Women's Panel hosted by Edmonton Chamber of Commerce.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WAVE's Engagement Working Group attended several events from focus groups to artistic plays and events that facilitated a dialogue of women's needs/concerns. Additionally, the Engagement Working Group is exploring the development of a presentation that can be delivered throughout the school system to increase awareness about WAVE, encourage youth engagement to support female peers with addressing equality, and increase their interest/awareness about women in politics, STEM and trade programs. Moving forward, the Engagement Group will continue to participate and provide support at events that address women's concerns and needs.

7. OTHER KEY PROJECTS

OPENING THE POTENTIAL, WOMEN LEADING IN EDMONTON

The Women's Initiative, with the support and leadership from Councillor Esslinger, recruited women and gender minorities to the relaunch of Opening the Potential: Women Leading in Edmonton. The program was adapted from previous years by changing from a one-on-one mentorship model to eight classes of training/orientation to allow for greater participation. Fifty-two women participated over eight months. There were opportunities for participants to meet with Councillors, MLAs and other representatives involved in politics to share learnings and support women interested in running, becoming involved in a campaign, or in taking on broader community leadership roles.

FCM'S DIVERSE VOICES

WAVE was involved with an exciting collaboration lead by the Multicultural Relations Section and partnered with the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, the Indo-Canadian Women's Association and Changing Together Centre for Immigrant Women. This project engaged with elected officials, women who have run for or been in elected office, and racialized new immigrants and Indigenous women. This work was looking at the under-representation of women in key leaderships roles. Following six focus groups, a two-day training was provided to increase participation.

This project is still underway and will be evaluated.

WOMEN'S INITIATIVE QUALITY OF LIFE SCORECARD

On Jan. 31, 2017, the first Edmonton's Women's Initiative Quality of Life Scorecard was released. The launch event included key scorecard findings, an analysis of what these findings mean for women in Edmonton and reflections from a panel of leaders about what they feel is working well, areas for improvement and suggested future priorities. WAVE was represented on that panel.

Work on the Women's Initiative Quality of Life Scorecard began several years ago to provide insight about women in Edmonton, track over-time where change may be occurring and have a "made in Edmonton" analysis of women. Edmonton Women's Quality of Life is compared with national and global gender gap rankings and evaluated under the following five goals:

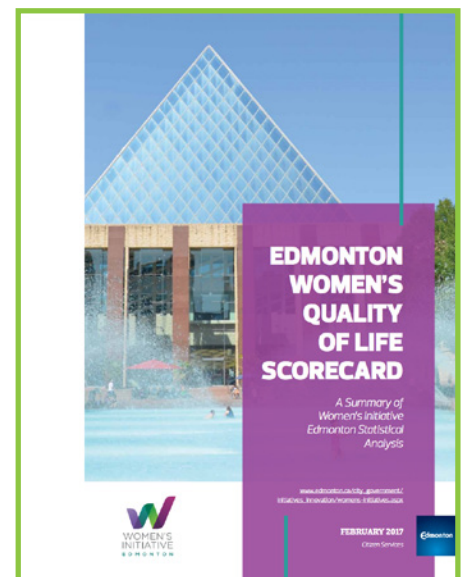
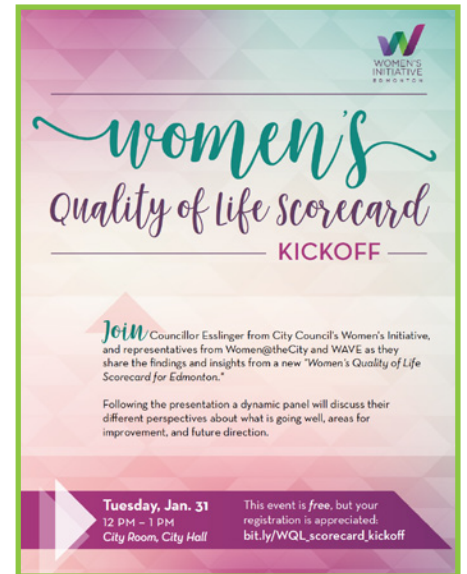
- » Finance and Economy
- » Leadership, Political Empowerment and Participation
- » Education
- » Health and Wellness
- » Safety

Edmonton women are above or on par with Canadian women as it pertains to the three goals of Finance and Economy, Education, and Health. The two goals that reflect room for improvement are Safety and Leadership, Political Empowerment and Participation.

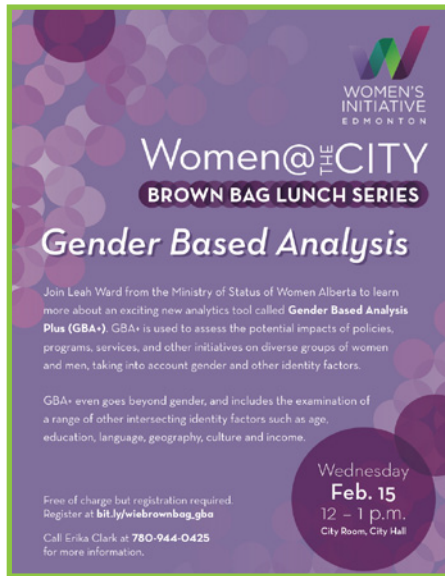
Specific areas where Edmonton women are behind national averages include:

- » part-time employment rates and participation in apprenticeships and trades,
- » number of women in Edmonton who are Council candidates and subsequently elected as municipal officials compared to other Census for Municipal Areas,
- » women in frontline supervisory roles, and
- » Edmonton women's homeless rates with provisional or full time shelter, or unsheltered homelessness.

This initial scorecard is meant as a benchmark so as new data is compiled, progress in Edmonton can be evaluated. From the results, further research and initiatives can be initiated, as required.



https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/WAVEQualityofLifeScorecard.pdf



WOMEN@THECITY - BROWN BAG EVENTS

In 2016/2017, Women's Initiative held a series of free brown bag workshops on topics such as: Mentorship/ Hearing from Inspiring Women Leaders, Negotiating and Presenting Yourself with Confidence, Stress Management, Self Care while Juggling, Gender Based Analysis+ Training and Women's Equity in the City of Edmonton. There was good attendance and discussion, averaging 50-100 participants at each workshop.

8. 2017 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

WAVE and the Women's Initiative hosted an event to mark 2017 International Women's Day. This year's theme was "Be Bold for Change" and more than 200 people attended. The event celebrated the valuable contributions provided by women, showcased resources and encouraged everyone to be part of solution to address needs and create positive change.

Other event highlights:

- » Mayor Iveson and Councillor Bev Esslinger provided welcoming remarks and presented City Council's 2017 International Women's Day Proclamation to Muriel Stanley Venne of the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women.
- » Minister Stephanie McLean, Status of Women, brought greetings from the Province of Alberta.
- » First Women's Initiative Leadership Award presentation to Liz O'Neill.
- » Performances by local women artists.
- » Collaboration with SkirtsAFire HerArts Festival and the new Mommy Monologue theatre production.
- » Fifteen community organizations provided resource tables, showcasing women's resources, gender equity and leadership for women and girls.

9. WOMEN'S INITIATIVE FIRST LEADERSHIP AWARD

During International Women's Day, the inaugural Women's Leadership Award was presented to celebrate women leaders in Edmonton. Liz O'Neill, a woman who has served children, youth and families in Alberta for almost four decades, was given the Award.

In 1979, Liz became the Executive Director of Big Sisters of Edmonton. The agency at that time served 50 children with a budget of \$60,000. Under Liz's leadership, Big Sisters and Big Brothers merged in 1991, and created Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area. In 2011, Big Brothers Big Sisters went through another merger, this time with Boys and Girls Clubs of Edmonton to create Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters, the first amalgamation of its kind in North America. Today the agency has nearly 3,000 volunteers, serves more than 4,500 children and youth, has a staff of 100 and a budget of just over \$6 million. The organization's remarkable growth and impact is a result of Liz and her staff's unwavering commitment to ensuring kids and families are supported, and have opportunities regardless of socioeconomic status.

Not only has Liz spent her career in service of Alberta families, she is currently the Co-Chair of the Alberta Mentoring Partnership, a member of the Edmonton Community Foundation Board and the TELUS Community Foundation Board. Liz was also the Chair of the Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Citizen's Advisory Committee, Alberta Culture and Community Spirit.

This Women's Leadership Award is one of many honours Liz has received throughout her career, including the YWCA Women of Distinction, Global TV's Women of Vision, Government of Canada 125th Anniversary Medal for Community Service and Alberta Centennial Medal for Community Service. In 2010, she was named the Dr. Charles Allard Chair in Business from MacEwan. Liz was also awarded an Excellence in Community Service Award from Intercultural Dialogue Institute of Edmonton and was inducted into the City of Edmonton's Community Service Hall of Fame. In 2016, Liz received an Honourary Doctor of Laws from the University of Alberta.

Liz has spent her career in the service of vulnerable kids and families has been recognized at the local, provincial and national level. Liz's response to the award is characteristically humble:



Liz O'Neill receiving our Women's Leadership Award.

“ I was honored to accept this amazing tribute and award on behalf of the incredible women that I work with each and every day. I have had the privilege of having great female mentors in my life and I know how important it is that each and every one of us ensures that we have such support. As I often say to people I have stood on the shoulders of giants to help me see a path forward. While we are in a very different and better place today as women than when I started my career, we still have many miles to travel, and if we travel together we can continue to make progress for all of us, women and men who respect and support and engage with each other in meaningful ways to build a vibrant community of people who look out for and support each other. ”

Where Will Our Focus Be Next Year?

LEADERSHIP/2017 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

WAVE has identified that increasing the number of women running in the 2017 Municipal election as a priority area. WAVE has begun planning ways to encourage more women to vote, volunteer on campaigns and run for Council.

SYMPOSIUM 2018

The next Women's Symposium is scheduled for Feb. 10, 2018 at the Westin Hotel. Engagements throughout the year leading up to the symposium will help inform topics and the event focus.

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS/PARTNERSHIPS

WAVE has identified key events, groups and stakeholders to connect with in 2017/2018 and will continue to reach out to increase their networks and partnerships.

POLICY

Policy areas for review next year include Infill Guidelines and Anti-racism Framework.

Other work will include developing Intersectional Gender Lens Policy Review Guidelines (i.e. gender neutral language, including needs of diverse women, equity vs. equality focusing on equal opportunity and access and not restricting specific gender either directly or indirectly).

SOCIAL MEDIA PLANS

In addition to the ongoing maintenance and presence on the website and social media, WAVE and the Women's Initiative are in the process of developing the third video on 'What is Intersectionality?'

How WAVE is Making a Difference

MIA NORRIE

“I feel that WAVE’s greatest impact has been to elevate the discussion of the participation of women in civic life and highlight the need for increased female participation in our community. I’ve been privileged to participate in the inception and start up of this initiative and am truly excited by the increased profile and credibility of the Committee. I’m proud of the energy, enthusiasm and shining examples of leadership that have been displayed by the diverse voices around our table. In my mind this is only been the beginning of where WAVE can contribute to building a vibrant and dynamic City that fosters and grows its female leaders.”



MEGHANA VALUPADAS CO-CHAIR

“WAVE is a symbol and promise to the women and girls of Edmonton that we are committed to achieving gender equity. I am especially proud of the active role that our members have taken to reach out to the community and represent WAVE at diverse events.”



CRISTINA STASIA

“WAVE’s policy work has benefitted the community. An inclusive approach is maintained to ensure women of all ages, ethnicity, income levels, and sexual orientation are represented for decisions impacting the community at large. City managers and departments are better informed of women’s issues and challenges and equally prioritizing the needs of all Edmontonians into decision-making. Equitable access to services and opportunities versus equality (applying the same principles for all citizens) was emphasized to ensure unique needs are addressed.”





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@equalityYEG