

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Women and Children's Shelter of Barrie Creates Women's Advocacy Council with funding from Women and Gender Equity Canada

**Barrie, Ontario, Tuesday July 14, 2020** - When Barrie ranked LAST on the 2019 report, "Best and Worst Places to be a woman" the Women and Children's Shelter of Barrie took action.

The Women & Children's Shelter of Barrie is pleased to announce the launch of a new initiative named *Our Voices, Our Freedom*. This initiative will create a Women's Advocacy Council through the generous financial support of Women and Gender Equity Canada. The WCSB is committed to ending all forms of violence experienced by women and girls. The Women's Advocacy Council will bolster the voices and experiences of women to highlight the systemic and oppressive barriers that prevent equitable opportunities, rights and safety for all women. Teresa MacLennan, Executive Director of the Women and Children's Shelter of Barrie commented, "We are excited for the Women's Advocacy Council to provide leadership in our community and provide a collective voice that will bring change to all areas of women's lives. We would like to thank Women and Gender Equity Canada for their funding support of \$214,000 for this project and welcome Sarah Cunningham to the role of Women's Advocacy Council Coordinator."

The Women's Advocacy Council have brought together 13 dynamic women with a wide range of experience and knowledge in the Simcoe County Area. The members of the Advisory Council have come from a broad range of sectors and areas of expertise. They will speak to the particular barriers facing diverse groups such as women of colour, Indigenous women and girls, LGBTQ2 and non-conforming persons, newcomer and migrant women, and women with disAbilities. The goal of the council is to advocate for advancement, increased opportunities, equality, and freedoms for all women and girls through social movement, awareness and democratic activism. Council will share experiences, challenges, and key issues that they face in relation to the gender gap. Council will provide feedback on recommended activities, guide roundtables, and be key figures in all resulting practices and activism.

The Women's Advocacy Council will establish initiatives that will address five pillars that impact women in our community: Women's Leadership and Demographic Participation, Women's Health, Women's Economical Security and Participation, Women's Personal Safety and Women's Education and Training.

"Through the Women's Advocacy Council we will be developing resources, recommendations and toolkits for the community to empower more women in our community. We will be gathering and conducting research within Simcoe County to eliminate the barriers that still exist within affordable childcare access, personal safety and pay gaps especially among LGBTQ2, Indigenous and Black women. I look forward to working with the community to improve the quality of lives for all women and girls. Together we can achieve equity and equality."-Sarah Cunningham, Women's Advocacy Council Coordinator. To Get Involved please visit: [www.barrieshelter.com](http://www.barrieshelter.com) or follow them on social media **Facebook:** Womens Advocacy Council **Instagram:** @womensadvocacy **Twitter:** @women\_advocacy

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*\*The Best and Worst Places to be a Woman in Canada 2019, Katherine Scott - Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives\**



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Shelter of Barrie



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