

Editorial – International Women's Day March 8th, 2021

#IWD2021 #ChooseToChallenge

International Women's Day (IWD) is observed annually on March 8th, celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women worldwide. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender equality across the world. The day aims to help nations set goals to eliminate discrimination and violence against women and focus on helping women gain full and equal participation in sustainable global development.

IWD first emerged from the activities of women involved in socialist and labour movements at the turn of the twentieth century in North America and across Europe. In the United States, the first National Woman's Day was observed on February 28, 1909. The Socialist Party of America designated this day in honour of the 1908 garment workers' strike in New York City. Women protested against poor working conditions, demanding better pay, shorter hours and the right to vote. In Europe, the movement was led by German campaigner and socialist Clara Zetkin, a champion of women and workers' rights. At the second International Conference of Working Women, held in Copenhagen in 1910, Clara Zetkin proposed that a special Women's Day be celebrated annually. The day would honour the women's rights movement, build support for women's suffrage and the right of women to vote. Zetkin's efforts were crucial to the day's recognition throughout Europe, and the first IWD was honoured on March 19, 1911 in Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland.



After World War II, IWD was already being celebrated in several countries. With the civil rights and peace movements gaining momentum in the United States, second-wave feminists created pressure for women's advancement. As a result, in Canada, a Royal Commission was created to study the status of women and a report was submitted to Parliament in December 1970.

In recognition of the women's movement's efforts, the United Nations (UN) observed 1975 as International Women's Year. At the same time, the UN began commemorating International Women's Day on March 8th. Two years later, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed on any day of the year by the Member States. Coinciding with International Women's Year, the first World Conference on Women took place in Mexico, from June 19 to July 2, 1975. A 10-year World Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women was formulated at the conference. The UN General Assembly proclaimed 1976-1985 the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace to implement the action plan.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/womens-day/background>

Today, International Women's Day is a day of celebration, reflection, advocacy and action, and is observed in countries worldwide. This year's **UN International Women's Day campaign theme:**

“A challenged world is an alert world and from challenge comes change. So let's all choose to challenge”



Family Services of Peel: 50 Years of Service to the People of Peel Region

This year, Family Services of Peel (FSP) is celebrating 50 years of providing services to the people in the Region of Peel. FSP was established in March 1971 as a non-profit, registered charitable organization to provide family and community support services for the people of Peel. Through leadership, research, collaboration and innovation, FSP continues to support families and individuals to transform their lives. As a multi-service agency sensitive to cultural and social diversity, it works to strengthen families, couples and individuals through professional counselling, educational programs, employment support services, support for people with developmental disabilities and their families, and support for victims of violence and abuse. To ensure the highest standards of care for its clients and community, FSP is staffed with experienced, qualified, and skilled professionals who work from a person-centred anti-oppression, anti-racism framework.

Throughout its 50 years in operation, FSP has been a part of many women's lives, often in times of crisis, supporting them in standing up for their rights and influencing them to overcome the challenges they face. On its Golden Jubilee and this International Women's Day, FSP reiterates its commitment to women and girls in the Region of Peel.

Examining the 'She-cession' brought on women by the pandemic: How Family Services of Peel Employment Ontario continues to help women rise beyond the status quo.

The unprecedented circumstances created by the pandemic that started in 2020 have triggered resourcefulness in everyone. Businesses had to evolve and change. Solid and relatively quick decisions had to be made to adapt, and this required re-evaluation of many aspects of major concern. This included shifting operations to involve technology as well as addressing concerns on health and safety. Ultimately, this created a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine everything about how work can be done.

The pandemic and subsequent shutdowns, along with a standard of work "attendance", disproportionately impacted many women seeking employment. Aside from hindering affordability due to low income, increased cost of living, along a multitude of other barriers, employed women found it increasingly difficult to sustain employment. These limitations, further exacerbated by a lack of childcare, forced many women to resign from their jobs. This shift continues to change the lives and trajectory of women, adding other unique and systemic barriers to finding employment. Women continue to be underrepresented in our economy.

On the bright side, this time is bringing a gradual but huge shift in employers' recognition that flexible work can be just as effective as traditional work, allowing women to work, live, and thrive, as well as carve their path. The programs offered at Family Services of Peel Employment Ontario continue to empower women to overcome barriers. Classes provided enable women to gain essential skills and knowledge necessary for their roles in the workforce. Family Services of Peel Employment Ontario helps ensure a smooth transition into employment and enhance job retention to achieve greater financial independence. Although this "**she-cession**" continues to be very real, there are still many reasons women can be hopeful, even in the face of the pandemic's ongoing challenges.

Testimonial – Satisfied Female Job Seeker- Employment Ontario Program at FSP

I am very appreciative of Family Services of Peel. I started my job search journey with them about 2 years ago. They were able to provide various resources and guidance. I attended quite a few workshops conducted by the career coaches which helped me to find a decent job as a Technical Service Administrator within few months. After I completed my contract, I was again job searching and this time it was in the middle of COVID 19. I visited Family Services of Peel again. I have also attended a few more workshops virtually on various topics. With the guidance of the FSP team, this time I managed to find a position in the Investment & Insurance Industry. Great Company and caring management. I would like to give a message of hope to all the job seekers to use ALL the resources available in your reach, stay POSITIVE. By any chance, if you are under the boundaries of Family Services of Peel, surely visit them and get their guidance and spread the word. Thank you.



Peel Institute on Violence Prevention | Family Services of Peel

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