

Women's Community Co-operative

'A WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE'

February 2026

February: The Month of Love

When we think about most of the other months already passed, it's easy to find some significance related to each one. June, the beginning of Summer. July - Canada Day. August holds the Civic Holiday, September is Labour Day, October we celebrate Thanksgiving and Halloween, November we 'Remember'. December is all about Christmas and with January we begin a brand New Year!

Now here we are... it's February. It's cold. It's grey. We've had a boatload of snow and frigid temps. We are sick of Winter and being stuck inside. Most of us aren't looking forward to either Groundhog Day or Valentines Day. However, February is widely known as the month of love primarily because it hosts Valentine's Day, a holiday centered on expressing affection, but it's also a time for celebrating love in all its forms: family, friends, and self through gestures and reflection. Then out of the deep dark freezing cold comes the warmth of Family Day! To those of us who have family, it's a day to get together just to celebrate with each other. For many of us, we celebrate with the friends who have become our chosen family. Some of us just enjoy the day off to just stay inside where it's warm. Family Day doesn't have an itinerary. No fireworks, no BBQ, no parade, no turkey dinner, no poppy to wear and no tree to decorate. Family Day is just a Canadian holiday celebrating the importance of family by providing a day off for quality time and connection with loved ones, whomever those loved ones tend to be.

However you choose to celebrate this special day, be it with family, friends, neighbours or your cat, we hope that it is a source of peace, love and laughter and cherished memories, reminding us that family is often "more than blood". Happy Family Day! Groundhog Day & Valentine's Day too!

BINGO!!!

Most Wednesday evenings there are a group of folks who get together in the Rec Room to play BINGO!!! Dawn Perry is the regular 'Caller' and Jackie Harris takes care of ordering cards etc. Depending on the evening, those joining to play are always changing. There are 'regulars' but there are also those of us who just show up to play depending on the night. I have found so much fun filled laughter within those couple of hours spent around those tables. All seriousness is left at home and everyone just comes together to play and chat and giggle and snack!

Where else can you get together and have fun literally for a few quarters? The camaraderie is second to none whether you're a seasoned 'died in the wool' avid Bingo player with a bag full of dabbers, or if you're like me and have to ask questions every single game. There's no judgement, just lightheartedness.

Consider joining the Bingo group and come out for a couple of hours just for fun! You might not realize just what you've been missing! Keep an eye on the white board in the lobby for the next game!

We hope you're the next one to feel the thrill of calling Bingo!!!!

B **I** **N** **G** **O**



Annual General Meeting - 'AGM'

On Wednesday January 21 we held our annual AGM meeting. What a fabulous turnout of Members in attendance! It was so great to see the room filled up with those who were both interested to hear how well Women's is doing financially, as well as to hear the results of the Board Election.

We'd like to first start out by thanking GHF's Kathy Dimassi for coming out in the weather to Chair the AGM, as well as Carin Finch and new Housing Services Supervisor Andrea Weingartner from the City of Hamilton for joining us. A shoutout of thanks as well to Doane, Grant & Thornton's Auditor, 'Cameron' for his easily followed and understood presentation of our financial standing! Thank you too to Betty Ann Baker from NPH and to Chuck Greenham our illustrious Accountant who both keep us in line, financially. Betty Ann and Carin are always on top of grants we may qualify for and Chuck who has eyes and ears like a hawk who ensures our money is spent intelligently and fiscally responsibly!

We are finally back on track with the presentation of the Audit in a timely fashion so that the Budget is ready for presentation before July 1st. Things have been a little out of whack since Covid. The Audit was presented and passed and the Auditor (Doan, Grant & Thornton) chosen once again for 2026/2027.

Way to go Women's!!!

Women's Co-op Board of Directors: Election 2026

We'd like to start out by first thanking those who signed up for the new Election Committee. Donna Costello, Billie Zelic, Dawn Perry, Cathy Brazier and Nancy Griffin! Thank you for taking on this most challenging responsibility, having to learn as you went. This new style of election isn't anything that we were used to here at Women's. You all did an incredible job going door to door to hand out information and processes - sometimes repeatedly to make sure that every member had the opportunity to have their voice heard in the vote. It took a few times, but in the end we got it right! Thank you all SO MUCH for your time and efforts!! A big thank you to Cathy and Dawn for manning the Advanced Poll as well as to Nancy for acting as Scrutineers! You all did a great job!

We thank the outgoing Board Members (Nancy Griffin, Vicky Berseth, Diane Downey and Emily McGregor who all gave the last two years of their time and talents, working through the End of Mortgage and capital projects. None of it a piece of cake. Thank you all for taking 'participation' to heart and doing what you can to ensure Women's carries on for years to come.

We welcome the newly elected Board Members to the incoming 2026/2027 Board year. Michele Miller, Jackie Harris as well as Diane Downey and Emily McGregor (both re-elected). Congratulations ladies! There is much to do in the coming year to continue on with fiscal responsibility with no mortgage, and moving us ahead toward the next decade. Thank you to all candidates who ran in the election. We know that all of us want only the best for our Co-op home. Our elections are always so very tight!

We would be remiss if we didn't thank Betty Ann Baker and her team from NPH, as well as Carin Finch from the City of Hamilton for another successful Board year.

And last but not least, thank you to all of the Members who took the time to come out and VOTE! It just goes to show how much you all care about the leadership of our wonderful Co-op and the importance of having a voice.

This is where you live! It should be of vital importance!

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Attention!

A reminder that there is NO Soliciting at Women's! We do not allow anyone to come into the Co-op and go door to door canvassing or soliciting. We have many Members who do not feel comfortable having a strange face at the Door, especially early in the mornings or later in the evening or night. Please respect your neighbours boundaries, remembering that not everyone runs on the same 'clock'!

Member of the Month!

A HUGE shout out of thanks to Melissa Bronson from Unit 201 for offering, and helping other members clean the snow off their cars! We have had a ton of snowfall through January and her and Cathy Brazier have been out salting and shoveling to help cover when Ashcreek (our Snow Removal contractor) was literally buried! This is community!!! A reminder to everyone to be careful in the parking lot and on sidewalks in treacherous weather!

Events Committee

The Event's Committee is at it again! This time they would like to invite everyone to come and enjoy a 'Members Only' Pancake Breakfast on Sunday February 15th (Valentine's Day/Family Day Weekend).

They will be serving delicious pancakes and sausages along with tea & coffee from 9:00 to 11:30 AM.

There will be a sign-up sheet for those wishing to attend and they ask that everyone please bring their own plates and utensils making clean up a little easier. If you'd like to help with set up or clean up, please see a member of the Event's Committee to volunteer.

The Sign Up sheet will be up in the lobby from February 1-13th. This is such a great sign that Spring is not that far away!!

50/50 tickets will once again be available in support of the Event's Committee!

Winter Workshops at GHF

Ready, Set, Grow: Expanding Our Co-op: With Karen Brodeur, Michael Norris CHF Canada and Glenn Furlong, CMHC

This seminar explored how housing co-ops can tackle the current housing crisis by expanding their footprint. As co-op growth has stalled over the last 30 years, the "Ready, Set, Grow" initiative provides a roadmap for bringing co-op principles to more people.

Key Strategies for Growth:

- The Essentials: Expansion requires two main ingredients: land (or property) and secure funding.
- Strength in Numbers: Interestingly, growing larger co-ops are easier to secure the finances professional help and resources needed to grow even further.
- Creative Conversion: Growth isn't just about new builds; it includes possibly acquiring commercial spaces and converting them into residential co-op communities.
- Expert Support: CHF Canada provides the navigation and help toward financial backing necessary to help co-ops manage these complex developments.

Workshop Spotlight: Compassion Fatigue Who takes care of the caretakers? With Sonia Byrne

This recent seminar explored the reality of Compassion Fatigue? The exhaustion we feel when supporting family or serving on demanding boards and committees.

Key Takeaways:

- Share the Load: Burnout happens when a few people carry everything. True community requires everyone to participate.
- Set Boundaries: Learn to say "no" to unrealistic expectations. If you try to meet everyone's demands, you lose yourself in the process.
- Unplug from "Perfection": The internet often shows a false version of life. Don't measure your worth against someone else's curated feed.
- Self-Care is Vital: Mindfulness isn't a luxury; it's a necessity. You cannot pour from an empty cup.