



# Women and Philanthropy in Ontario

In November 2013, the Association of Fundraising Professionals Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada hosted a conference that brought together charity leaders, donors and volunteers to explore the philanthropy of women in Ontario. Here is a collection of insights from the conference and beyond.

## AT A GLANCE

- 3 200 000 000** Total value of assets held by women in Canada
- 48** Percentage of women in Canada’s labour force
- 68** Employment rate for women between the ages of 15 and 64
- 62** Percentage of female medical graduates between the ages of 25 and 34
- 17** Percentage of small businesses owned by women
- 39** Percentage of women who reported at least one incidence of sexual violence since the age of 16

## SAVE THE DATE

International Women’s Day, held every year on **March 8**, celebrates the economic, political and social achievements of women - past, present and future.

## CASE STUDY

The Canadian Women’s Foundation was established through the collaboration of many women across Canada. It began with an early conversation between noted philanthropist Nancy Ruth and politician Rosemary Brown, who identified a need to create a pathway for women to support one another through charitable giving. At that time, only two percent of all donations were going to services for women and girls. In 1986, Nancy Ruth joined community organizer Susan Woods and others in hosting a series of discussion groups to address issues of giving, power and equality for women, with a special focus on ending family violence and addressing the root causes of women’s poverty. Through these exchanges, the Canadian Women’s Foundation was officially launched in 1991 with a seed donation of \$50,000. That year, the Foundation awarded \$40,000 in grants to women’s organizations, and since then it has distributed \$40 million to over 1,200 community programs and supported every women’s shelter across Canada.

## WISE WORDS



“The conference on women and philanthropy was unique because of the enormous cultural, religious and socio-economic diversity of the voices that we heard from. There are, however, several notable trends, issues and recurring themes. For example, when it comes to charitable giving, women tend to make deep and lasting commitments that address systemic issues and big ideas. Giving is not simply a financial act, nor a means of self-promotion. We also learned that many gender-based causes are first established at a grassroots level and that philanthropy and volunteerism have helped mobilize change on both the regional and national stage. Finally, the spirit of collaboration runs deep and, through this, women’s advocacy groups and charities have led many great social movements locally and abroad.”

— *Barbara McInnes, C.M., Chair, Women and Philanthropy Conference*

## BACK IN TIME

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY REMARKABLE MILESTONES ON THE ROAD TO WOMEN’S EQUALITY IN CANADA.

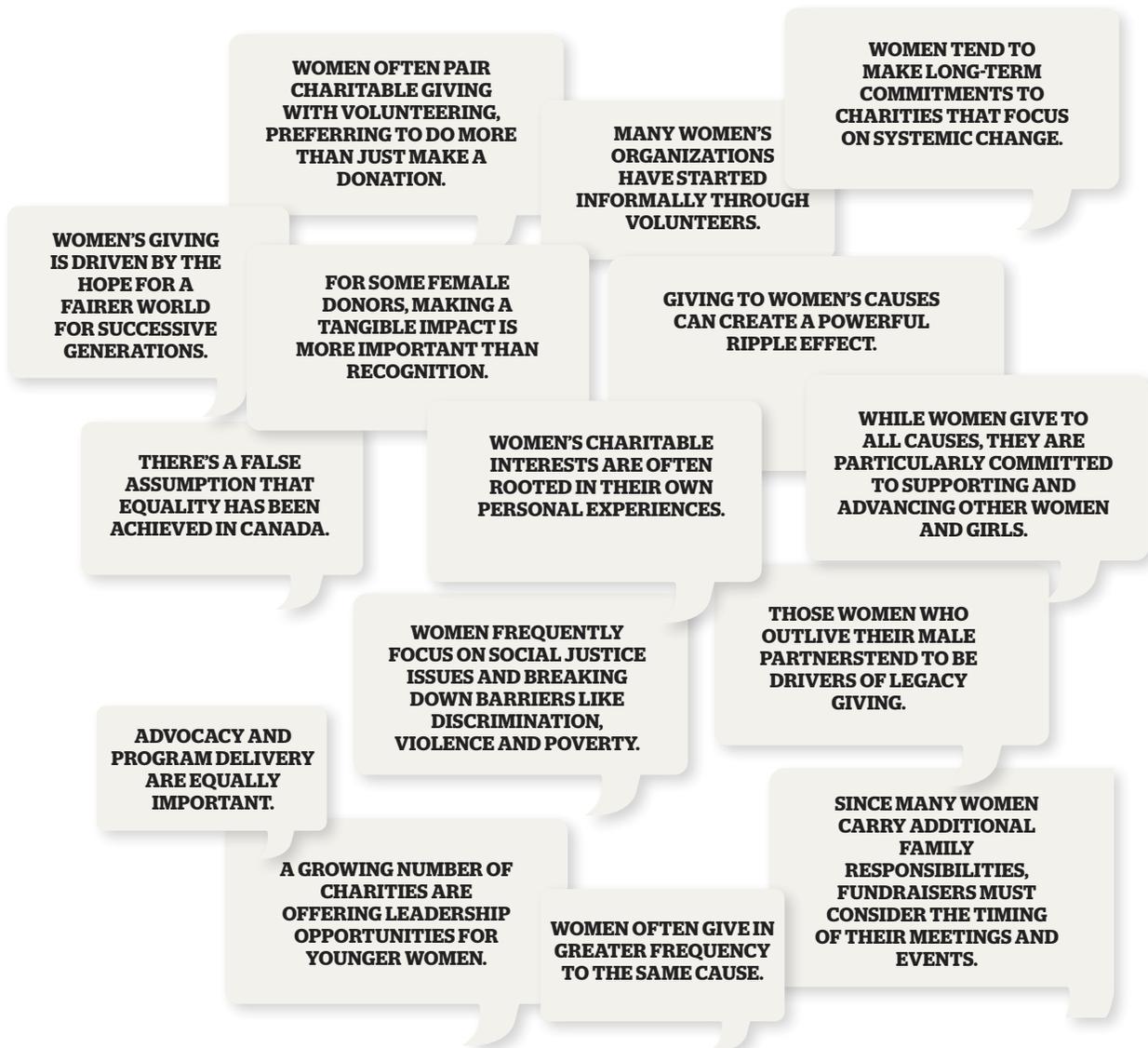
In 1876, at the beginning of the suffragette movement, Dr. Emily Howard Stowe and her daughter, Dr. Augusta Stowe-Gullen, founded the Toronto Women’s Literary Club, a precursor to the Dominion Women’s Enfranchisement Association. In 1917, women secured the right to vote in Ontario and three years later the Dominion Elections Act recognized that every eligible Canadian was entitled to vote in federal elections. A landmark ruling by the British Privy Council in 1929, overturned the decision of

the Canadian Supreme Court, recognizing women as persons under the law. In 1956, the federal government passed the Female Employees Equal Pay Act, stating that women must be paid the same wages as men for similar work. The Ontario Women’s Directorate was created in 1983 to focus on issues of pay and employment equity. A couple of years later, the Legal Education and Action Fund was formed to ensure that women’s rights become a central component of the Canadian Charter. The murder of

14 women at L’Ecole Polytechnique on December 6, 1989 in Montreal served as a call to action for all Canadians to focus on ending gender-based violence. Each year, on December 6, communities come together in remembrance and reflection. Over the years, a growing awareness of inclusion in Ontario has also led to the establishment of several non-profits and agencies that provide dedicated support and services for women based on a diverse range of linguistic, cultural, and social factors.

## INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERTS

Conference presenters and participants shared many great examples and tips about women's philanthropy. Here is what we heard:



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[www.afpinclusivegiving.ca](http://www.afpinclusivegiving.ca)

The Women and Philanthropy Conference was part of a series for fundraising professionals, donors, and volunteers to develop a greater understanding of the giving traditions and charitable interests of several diverse communities in Ontario. Organized by the AFP Greater Toronto Chapter and the AFP Ottawa Chapter, this initiative was generously funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Partnership Project and the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada.