

PRESENTING
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WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE
SKILLS TRAINING
OF WINDSOR INC.



PROUDLY PRESENTS OUR ANNUAL

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY Celebration 2026

PROGRAM GUIDE

March 8, 2026 | 5:30pm - 8:30pm

ST. CLAIR CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

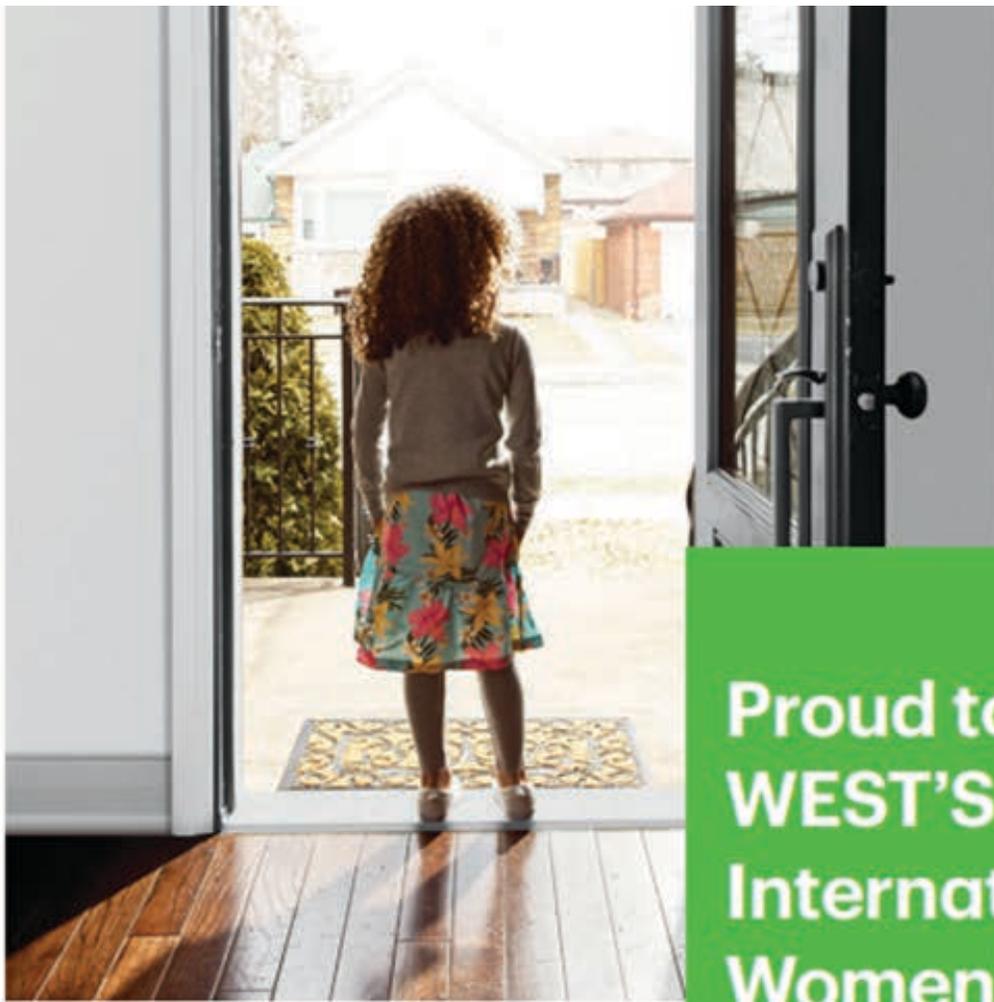
GIVING TODAY. GAINING TOMORROW.

#GiveToGain

Keynote Speaker:
Warden Hilda MacDonald

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Proud to support
WEST'S
International
Women's Day
Gala.

We are working together with Women's Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor. It's just one way we are helping to open doors for a more inclusive and sustainable tomorrow.

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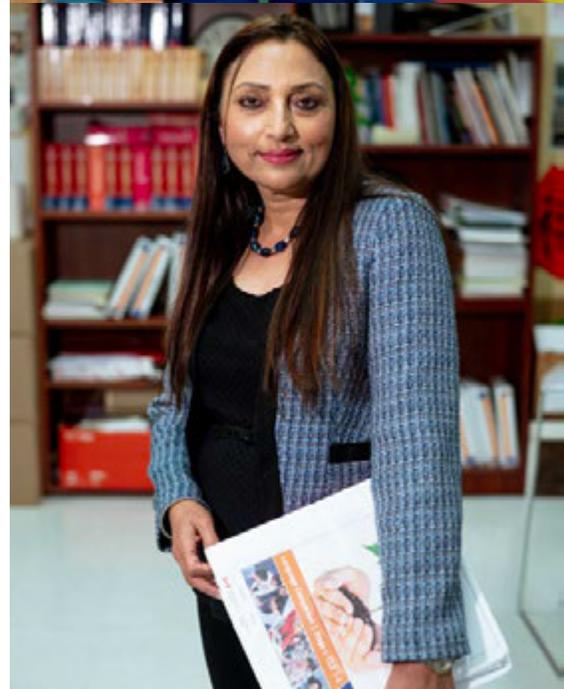
LEADERS IN POSITIONING WOMEN FOR SUCCESS

BUILDING SKILLS & CONFIDENCE

Settlement Services
Youth Programs
Integrated Employment
Childcare
Women in Skilled Trades

For more information about WEST:

-  www.westofwindsor.com
-  info@westofwindsor.com
-  (519) 256 6621
-  647 Ouellette Avenue, Windsor, ON



PROGRAM

Itinerary

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Registration/Networking Reception

5:30 PM - 5:35 PM

Welcome/Land Acknowledgement/O Canada

Dr. Janelle Abela, CEO & Growth Strategist, Diversity Solutions Strategy Firm Inc.
Eclipse Duo by Melissa and Randy

5:35 PM - 5:45 PM

#GiveToGain Campaign Video

5:45 PM - 5:50 PM

Greetings by WEST Leadership

Rose Anguiano Hurst, WEST, Executive Director
Nadine Manroe-Wakerell, WEST Board, President

5:50 PM - 5:55 PM

Greetings by Presenting Sponsor

Buttol Fatima & Rheane Diaz, TD

5:55 PM - 6:20 PM

Keynote Speaker

Hilda MacDonald, Warden of Essex County

6:20 PM - 6:30 PM

Journey Towards Success Awards: The Phenomenal Woman Award

TD Bank, Presenting Gala Sponsor
Georgia Vary, Recipient

Journey Towards Success Awards: New Partnership Award

WEST, Gold Sponsor
Myrtle Donnipad, Recipient

Journey Towards Success Awards: The Sisterhood Award

Erie Shores HealthFoundation, Silver Sponsor
Melissa Munger, Recipient

Journey Towards Success Awards: Youth Community Leadership Award

CTV Bell Media, Silver Sponsor
Hajar Abelouah, Recipient

PROGRAM

Itinerary

Journey Towards Success Awards: The Visionary Award

AM800/CKLW, Silver Sponsor

Margo Reilly, Recipient

6:30 PM - 6:35 PM

Band Performance

Eclipse Duo by Melissa and Randy

6:35 PM - 6:45 PM

Journey Towards Success Awards: Influencer Award

Caesars Windsor Cares, Silver Sponsor

Josie Hope, Recipient

Journey Towards Success Awards: Perseverance Award

Attache Group, Silver Sponsor

UHC - Hub of Opportunities, Recipient

Journey Towards Success Awards: Daphne V. Clarke Trailblazer Award

LiUNA!625, Silver Sponsor

Earnest Immigration and Citizenship Services Inc., Recipient

Journey Towards Success Awards: DEI Award

The Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, Silver Sponsor

Mary Cifende Aganze, Recipient

Journey Towards Success Awards: Give to Gain Award

Biz X Magazine, Silver Sponsor

UNIFOR Women in Trades, Recipient

6:45 PM - 7:00 PM

Dinner Reflection

Dr. Mona Stonefish

7:00 PM - 8:20 PM

Dinner

8:20 PM - 8:30 PM

Raffle Close/Closing Remarks

Dr. Janelle Abela



Host Speaker

Janelle Abela | Diversity Solutions Strategy Firm Inc.

Dr. Janelle Abela is the CEO and Growth Strategist of Diverse Solutions Strategy Firm, where she works with organizations to strengthen leadership, communication, and workplace culture through practical, people-centered strategies. A former K-12 educator, Janelle's work is grounded in learning theory, psychological safety, and real-world application. She completed her PhD examining Canadian police officer perceptions of equity, diversity, and inclusion training, exploring the conditions that influence how people engage with and apply workplace learning.

Janelle has worked across healthcare, skilled trades, finance, public safety, education, professional athletics, and non-profit sectors throughout North America. She is known for translating complex topics – leadership, communication, trust, and equity – into clear, actionable tools that support sustainable change. Janelle values practical, grounded work that helps organizations and communities grow in sustainable and meaningful ways.



Honoured Guest

Elder Mona Stonefish

Dr. Mona Stonefish, Bear Clan, Potawatomi, Bkejwanong, Three Fires Confederacy, is a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and recognized leader in decolonizing education, social justice, disability studies, arts and activism, and Nishnaabe language, culture and tradition. With a deep-rooted commitment to her community's well-being, Stonefish has dedicated her life to advancing Indigenous causes. Central to her work is her tireless advocacy for Indigenous education, ensuring that it is both culturally relevant and equitable. Through her efforts, she has helped amplify Indigenous voices on national and

international platforms, challenging discriminatory policies and fostering greater self-governance and sovereignty.

Dr. Stonefish's leadership extends beyond advocacy; she actively engages in community development initiatives, creating spaces for cultural revitalization and intergenerational healing. As a respected educator and mentor, she imparts traditional knowledge to younger generations, nurturing future Indigenous leaders. Her impact has been recognized through numerous awards, celebrating her contributions to Indigenous education, leadership, and advocacy. Mona Stonefish's unwavering dedication and passion continue to inspire positive change within Indigenous communities and beyond, leaving an indelible mark on the fight for Indigenous rights and social justice.



Musical Guest

Eclipse Duo

Eclipse Duo is a talented musical act hailing from Kingsville, Ontario, known for their dynamic performances and versatile sound. Comprised of Melissa and Randy, the duo brings a unique blend of acoustic and contemporary music, spanning various genres to create an unforgettable listening experience. Whether performing classic hits or original pieces, Eclipse Duo captivates audiences with their harmonious melodies, vibrant energy, and undeniable passion for music. Their ability to engage and connect with their audience makes them a perfect fit for any event, and they are thrilled to be part of tonight's celebration

Meet our KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Hilda MacDonald

Warden of County of Essex

Hilda MacDonald got involved in local politics when she opened her kitchen shop in uptown Leamington.

She became active in the Business Improvement Association, serving as chair for several years. She also sat on the Leamington Chamber of Commerce Board and the Economic Development committee.

After the sale of her business, she ran for councillor in 2006 and again in 2008. She led the polls in both elections.

During her time as a councillor, Hilda remained actively involved in the community, serving as a council representative on the BIA and taking an active role with local Migrant Worker programs.

In 2014, she was acclaimed as Deputy Mayor.

In 2018, Hilda became the second female mayor in the history of Leamington, 61 years after the election of the first woman mayor, Grace McFarland.

In her first mayoral term, she was appointed to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the board of the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities, which she chaired. She served for six years on both boards.

After she was re-elected mayor in 2022, she ran for the position of Warden of the County of Essex and won to become first female warden in the history of the county.

Hilda is honoured and proud to serve her community and the region, working to contribute positively to the quality of life for the residents who live here.



Message from the PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to our 2026 International Women's Day Celebration!

International Women's Day is a moment to pause and a moment to push forward. It is a time to celebrate the strength, resilience, and achievements of women and allies in our community, while also recommitting ourselves to the work that remains unfinished. This year's theme, #GiveToGain, invites us to reflect on a powerful truth: when women are supported, everyone benefits.

At Women's Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor Inc., this principle is not theoretical, it is lived every day. We see it in the confidence gained when a woman secures meaningful employment. We see it in the ripple effect when one opportunity strengthens an entire family. We see it when communities grow more resilient because women have been equipped with the tools, knowledge, and support to thrive. #GiveToGain reminds us that empowering women is not an act of charity, it is a collective investment in a stronger, more equitable future.

For nearly four decades, WEST has been a trusted anchor for women navigating transition, opportunity, and growth. Each year, more than 3,000 women walk through our doors with diverse lived experiences, aspirations, and challenges — yet they are united by a shared determination to move forward. Through employment training, language development, entrepreneurship supports, mentorship, and wrap-around services, WEST works to remove barriers that stand in the way of economic security and self-determination. Our programs are rooted in dignity, inclusion, and the belief that women deserve not just access, but agency.

As our community continues to evolve, so too must the supports available to women. We are proud of WEST's expansion into our second location at Roundhouse Centre, an

initiative that began in 2024 and celebrated its grand opening in early 2025. Today, we are excited by the continued success of this space — a hub that has allowed us to reach more women, deliver services more effectively, and strengthen our presence within the community. The Roundhouse location reflects our commitment to accessibility, innovation, and meeting women where they are. It is already helping us better serve clients, deepen partnerships, and respond more readily to emerging needs across Windsor-Essex.

#GiveToGain also challenges us to think more broadly about what giving truly means. Giving is not limited to funding or formal support. It is mentorship freely offered. It is an employer taking a chance. It is an advocate using their voice. It is a community choosing inclusion over exclusion. When knowledge is shared, confidence grows. When doors are opened, pathways emerge. When opportunity is extended, leadership follows.

This evening is both a celebration and a statement of values. We honour the individuals, organizations, employers, and partners who exemplify the spirit of #GiveToGain through their generosity, leadership, and commitment to equity. We are especially proud to recognize this year's Journey Towards Success Award recipients, whose actions remind us that meaningful change is driven by people willing to invest in others.

We are also honoured to hear from our keynote speaker, Warden Hilda MacDonald, whose leadership reflects the importance of service, collaboration, and community-centered decision-making. Voices like hers reinforce the idea that progress is strongest when it is shared.

While tonight is a celebration, it is also a reminder that our work continues. Barriers persist. Inequities remain. But together — through partnership, compassion, and continued investment in women — we are positioned to do more. WEST is committed to building on its momentum, expanding its impact, and continuing to serve as a place of possibility for women across our region.

Let this International Women's Day be a reminder of what is possible when we give with intention. When we invest in women, we gain stronger families, healthier communities, and a future shaped by opportunity rather than limitation. Together, we can ensure that progress is not only achieved but sustained.

When we give, we all gain.

Sincerely,

Rose Anguiano Hurst
Nadine Manroe-Wakerell



Meet OUR BOARD



President of the Board
**NADINE
MANROE-WAKERELL**



Past President
ANN DIAB



Vice President
NADIA BHATTI



Treasurer
HELENA PALMA-KUREK



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Director
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Director
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Director
JESSICA WATSON



Director
PRIYANKA PHILIP



Director
DR. FELICIA LAWAL



Director
GEMMA GREY HALL



Special Advisor
**MICHELLE
MOXLEY-PELTIER**



Special Advisor
CARI-LYN RISTIC



Honorary Board Member
SHEILA BARKER

Meet our
LEADERSHIP TEAM





Rose Anguiano Hurst

Executive Director

Rose has led WEST as Executive Director since 1995, overseeing a team of 65 staff. With a wealth of experience in non-profit management, she has been instrumental in WEST's growth to serving over 3000 women annually. Rose is dedicated to empowering women in the community through skills development and meaningful employment.



Olivia Zhao

Director of Finance

Olivia oversees all financial operations with precision and expertise. With her keen eye for detail and dedication to financial integrity, Olivia ensures that WEST's resources are managed efficiently to support our mission of empowering women in the community.



Seita Sadoo-Thomas

Programs Manager of Youth, Communication, Fund Development, and Special Projects

Seita, holding an MBA in Entrepreneurship and Technology Management, has dedicated eight years to WEST. Drawing from her extensive business acumen, she focuses on grant writing, fund development, and communication. Leading programs like LEAD, SEAT, and gender equality initiatives, Seita is committed to propelling WEST's mission forward through innovative strategies and empowering youth.



Anabella Hatami

Programs Manager of Settlement Services for Newcomer Women and Girls

Anabella Hatami is a social worker and community leader with over 20 years of experience in social services and more than a decade in the settlement sector. As Program Manager at Women's Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor, she leads a diverse portfolio of programs supporting newcomer women, families, and youth. Passionate about inclusion, and women's empowerment, Anabella is deeply committed to building responsive, community-driven services that help newcomers thrive.



Stephanie Allen

Programs Manager of Skilled Trades

Stephanie, leveraging her experience as the EPA Coordinator, now oversees a diverse range of programs including EPA, CNC Millwright, CCT, and the innovative SMART for Women program, funded by UTIP. With her leadership, these initiatives continue to empower women in skilled trades, providing them with the tools and support needed to thrive in traditionally male-dominated fields.



Corina Jancev

Programs Manager of Integrated Employment Services

Corina Jancev is a proven leader in employment services with over 16 years of experience at WEST. She holds a Master's Degree in Sociology and an Bachelor's Degree in Family and Social Relations from the University of Windsor, grounding her work in a strong understanding of social and labour-market dynamics. As Manager of Integrated Employment Services, Corina oversees the delivery of Employment Ontario programs and leads a multidisciplinary team focused on achieving strong client and program outcomes. Her strategic leadership, commitment to service excellence, and track record of driving measurable results continue to advance WEST's mission and strengthen employment opportunities for job seekers in our community.

Our PRINCIPLES

1

Mission Statement

Women's Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor Inc. (WEST) exists to provide training for severely employment disadvantaged visible minority women in order to improve their employability in the workforce and/or to further their education.



2

Vision

Leaders in Positioning Women for Success



3

Value Statement

Together at WEST:

- We are committed to treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- We strive to create an environment of accountability and professionalism of the highest standard.
- We passionately aim to foster, promote, and advocate for inclusivity and diversity of all women.
- We are dedicated to serve the needs of the community with compassion and empathy.



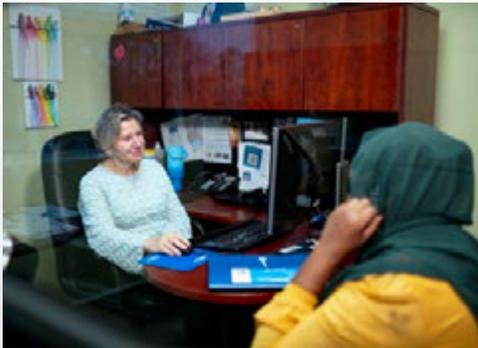
Our PROGRAMS



Young Women in LEAD

Manager: Seita Sadoo-Thomas; Coordinator: Jasmine Capan

Launched in 2016 and renewed in 2024 for another three years, the LEAD program has supported 82 participants since the renewal, with over half securing full-time employment or returning to school. Funded in part by the Youth Employment Skills Strategy, it is a paid program empowering young women facing employment barriers through eight weeks of in-class training followed by six weeks of hands-on work placements.



Settlement Services for Newcomer Women and Girls

Manager: Anabella Hatami; Coordinators: Maha Majdalawim, Juan Wang, Naheed Ahmad-Salman

The Settlement Services Program, funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), supports newcomer women as they settle into Canadian society. It provides employment programs, language training, and settlement support to help them navigate challenges, gain skills, and achieve stability. Through one-on-one counseling, group sessions, and community referrals, participants receive tailored support. In 2024–2025, we continued supporting newcomer women and girls through initiatives such as introducing newcomer youth to sports, organizing industry tours with community partners and employers, and hosting information sessions on education in Canada, health care, and other essential topics.



Integrated Employment Services

Manager: Corina Jancev; Acting Coordinator: Sara Ashour

Funded by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development through the Windsor Regional Employment Network (WREN), WEST transitioned to the Integrated Employment Services (IES) model in 2024. This client-centred approach focuses on job retention, inclusion, and coordinated service delivery, offering individualized supports such as job search assistance, career planning, skills development, employer matching, and post-placement support. Since 2024, services have expanded to Amherstburg and South Windsor, with further growth in 2025 through the LaSalle satellite location. IES at WEST works closely with local employers and community partners through job fairs, networking events, and outreach to connect job seekers with meaningful employment and strengthen access across the region.



Women in Skilled Trades

Manager: Stephanie Allen; Coordinators: Fasiha Bashir, Mary Ann Montagano

Our Skilled Trades programs empower women, especially those with no prior experience, to enter in-demand trades and address labour shortages. In partnership with St. Clair College and UNIFOR Local 444, the CNC/Industrial Mechanic Millwright Pre-Apprenticeship Program has supported 260 women, while the Electrical Pre-Apprenticeship Program has introduced 80 women to the trade. Our Air Conditioning, Refrigeration, and Sheet Metal program has helped 20 women begin careers in HVAC. The \$3 million SMART Program will support 400 underrepresented women apprentices over the next three years. Additionally, the ICCTW program, delivered with LIUNA 625, trained 76 women in trades including Electrical, Carpentry, and Heavy Equipment Operation, with two participants earning Red Seal certification. Continued funding enables further program growth and impact.

Client's SUCCESS STORY

“Joining the Empowering Women for Employment (EWE) program was a truly meaningful experience for me. When I first arrived in Windsor, everything was new, and this program provided me with great support and guidance.

The staff at WEST were always kind and professional, and the training sessions they offered perfectly complemented the skills and experience I already had.

Thanks to their continuous support and their careful effort to match me with the right volunteer placement, I had a wonderful experience, I learned a lot, felt valued, and most importantly, was offered a job at the same organization where I volunteered.

This has been a very special achievement for me, and it was all possible thanks to the opportunity that WEST opened for me. I truly recommend this program to all women who want to grow, learn, and find their path in this city.”

Erika - EWE Participant



Ann Wilson, Oxley Estate Winery
Harrow Local Business

Libro Credit Union celebrates the achievements of all women this International Women's Day!

Women contribute significantly to our thriving community. Libro is loyal to local and proudly supports the many strong female business leaders and entrepreneurs across southwestern Ontario. Local businesses need our support now more than ever.

Supporting local means you care about the community you live in – and so do we. Thank you for supporting our local businesses!



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5 Ways to Support Local:

1. Write an honest and supportive review of their business online.
2. Tag them on social media, share their posts and follow them if you aren't already.
3. Tell your family and friends.
4. Order take-out or curbside delivery or buy from their online store.
5. Purchase a gift card (they don't expire).

Proudly supporting local businesses for over 75 years.

WHAT #GIVETOOGAIN MEANS TO US



#GiveToGain means paying it forward, creating impact.



#GiveToGain means leading with generosity, and contributing because it creates value and is the right thing to do.



#GiveToGain means using my strengths to uplift other women, knowing we all rise together.



#GiveToGain means empowering women by sharing my gifts and creating opportunities for growth.



#GiveToGain is the foundation of community, built on trust, goodwill, and mutual support.



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Growing Leadership. Growing Opportunity.

Today, we celebrate the women whose leadership and dedication strengthen Ontario's greenhouse sector and our communities every day.

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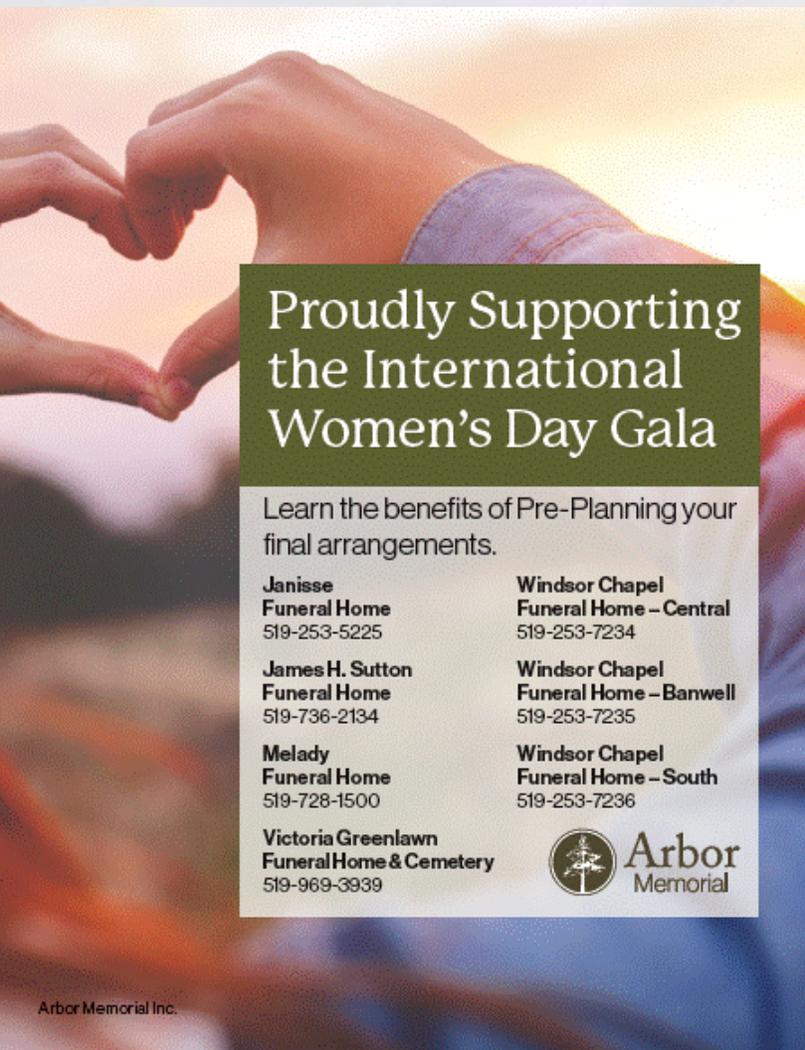
Client's SUCCESS STORY

"The support I received from WEST and the Integrated Employment Services program had a meaningful impact on my career journey. The staff here, especially Dolor was very enthusiastic and supportive, and she guided me step by step on how to write and improve my resume. She also actively helped me search for job opportunities on a daily basis, which made me feel encouraged and supported throughout the process.

With her guidance and encouragement, I became more confident in my job search and better prepared for the Canadian workplace. As a result, I was able to secure employment and move forward in my career.

I am truly grateful for the support and services provided by WEST, and I sincerely appreciate the positive impact this program has had on my professional growth."

Huan J - IES Client



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Arbor
Memorial

Culture is what you tolerate.

Especially on International Women's Day.

Equitable, inclusive workplaces are shaped by everyday leadership choices — what is addressed, what is ignored, and who is empowered to lead.

It's not always black and white.

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and psychologically safe
workplaces.*

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Dr. Janelle Abela
CEO, Growth Strategist

PHENOMENAL WOMAN AWARD

Sponsored by TD

An individual whose commitment, influence, and innovative efforts drive meaningful progress toward an inclusive and equitable society.

Georgia Vary

Georgia Vary's journey into the skilled trades reflects resilience, determination, and the power of opportunity. After working as a security guard, Georgia chose to explore a more hands-on career and transitioned into manufacturing, where she discovered her passion for skilled trades. Unsure whether to pursue Electrical or Industrial Mechanic Millwright, she joined WEST's first Electrical program, approaching her training with positivity, dedication, and a strong work ethic.

After completing her in-class training, Georgia remained persistent through early job-search challenges and secured a placement in the Millwright Department at Highbury Canco in January 2023. When a company strike interrupted her placement, WEST worked with Georgia to amend her contract so she could continue once operations resumed. Her perseverance paid off, leading to continued employment and a 433 Industrial Mechanic Millwright apprenticeship.

Today, Georgia works as a Millwright Apprentice with the Ontario Clean Water Agency, building a strong future in a non-traditional field. Her story highlights how WEST's support and training help women break barriers, build self-sufficiency, and thrive in skilled trades.



Proud to support
WEST'S
International
Women's Day
Gala.

NEW PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Sponsored by WEST OF WINDSOR

An individual or business who is new to the WEST organization and supporting our clients.



Myrtle Donnipad

Myrtle Donnipad is an Economic Development professional for the Town of Amherstburg, leading strategic initiatives that strengthen local industry, attract new investment, and support workforce and business growth. With over a decade of experience in planning and community development, Myrtle's work focuses on building collaborative, inclusive economies that connect people, place, and opportunity.

She has been instrumental in initiating and coordinating partnerships with WEST, Workforce WindsorEssex, the WindsorEssex Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre, Community Futures Essex County, and the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade to champion local entrepreneurship, upskilling, and innovation across the region.

Her commitment to fostering shared prosperity continues to position Amherstburg as a model for community-driven economic growth.

EMPOWERING WOMEN. TRANSFORMING LIVES.

For over 35 years, Women's Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor Inc. (WEST) has been dedicated to empowering women in our community by providing employment training, career development, mentorship, and leadership opportunities.

- ✔ Settlement
- ✔ Language Training
- ✔ Employment Services



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OF WINDSOR INC.



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SISTERHOOD AWARD

Sponsored by Erie Shores Health Foundation

A strong female leader of Windsor- Essex, who demonstrates passion and perseverance for women's equality, and is actively engaged in the community.



Melissa Munger

Melissa Munger is a seasoned office manager with over 18 years of experience at KPMG, where she has played a key role in supporting administrative teams, managing office operations, and fostering a collaborative workplace. Originally from the United States, Melissa has been a permanent resident of Canada for 25 years, bringing a unique cross-border perspective to her professional journey.

Deeply committed to community involvement, Melissa actively supports organizations such as United Way Windsor-Essex, Food Banks of Canada, and Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society through fundraising and volunteerism.

Melissa's dedication to mentorship and opportunity is reflected in her long-standing involvement with WEST's EWE program. For over a decade, she has supported participants through hiring and mentorship during tax season and has served on the program's advisory board. Her continued commitment to growth, teamwork, and empowering others makes her a valued leader and advocate in the community.

Partners in Healthcare



YOUTH COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Sponsored by CTV Bell Media

The nominee must be a youth creating positive change in Windsor Essex.

Hajar Abelouah

Hajar Abelouah is a dedicated professional, community role model, and proud mother of two. She holds a Master's degree in Audit and Accounting and a Bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management. Before immigrating to Canada in 2024, Hajar worked in a government role in Morocco, building a strong foundation in leadership and administration.

As a first-generation immigrant, Hajar faced the challenge of starting over in a new country with limited English skills. She enrolled in WEST's LEAD program, where she strengthened her communication skills, built professional connections, and gained valuable workplace experience. Her placement through the program became the gateway to her current career.

Today, Hajar serves as Client Relations Manager at Earnest Immigration and as a Director and French Teacher at Earnest Learning. Through her work, she empowers newcomers—particularly women and youth—to gain confidence, develop language skills, and access new opportunities. Hajar's journey reflects resilience, growth, and the impact of support in building meaningful careers and stronger communities.



LOCAL BREAKING NEWS

CTV
NEWS
WINDSOR

WEEKNIGHTS 6

CTVNewsWindsor.ca

STEFANIE MASOTTI

VISIONARY AWARD

Sponsored by AM800/CKLW

An individual whose commitment, influence, and innovative efforts drive meaningful progress toward an inclusive and equitable society.



Margo Reilly

Margo Reilly is the Executive Director of the Windsor Family Health Team and a respected leader in advancing integrated care, equity, and community collaboration. With an interdisciplinary background in business, healthcare leadership, research, and alternative medicine, she is known for achieving meaningful system change through compassionate and strategic leadership.

In 2025, Margo was recognized as one of the Top 50 Leaders in Healthcare, reflecting her pioneering work in equity-focused innovation, particularly in oral health education and social prescribing. Under her leadership, the Windsor Family Health Team has received multiple awards for its measurable impact on community health and well-being across Windsor-Essex.

With over a decade of experience in primary care leadership, and a background as a Classical Homeopath and entrepreneur, Margo has consistently fostered cross-sector collaboration to remove barriers and create inclusive, patient-centred solutions. Her career exemplifies a deep commitment to equity, innovation, and community-driven care.



MORNINGS

WITH
MIKE AND MEG

WEEKDAYS 6-10



INFLUENCER AWARD

Sponsored by Caesars Windsor Cares

An individual who has leveraged their personal and professional networks to create positive change in WindsorEssex



Josie Hope

Josie Hope is an accountant with experience across government, non-profit, and private sectors, driven by a strong commitment to finding meaning through community impact. Her passion for giving back is reflected in her extensive volunteer work, mentorship, and dedication to helping individuals grow personally and professionally.

Since 2017, Josie has volunteered with CPA Canada's Financial Literacy program, leading interactive sessions for youth and adults on financial skills, strategic financial management, and tax planning. She has also hosted business students from St. Clair College, providing hands-on experiential learning in an accounting environment.

Josie serves as a Director with the Windsor Family Health Team, sits on the Hospice For Life Foundation Board, and is a member of WEST's advisory committee. In addition, she mentors women through the Scotiabank Women Initiative Program and delivers a financial fitness workshop to community groups and participants in WEST's Empowering Women for Employment (EWE) Program.

Through her leadership and mentorship, Josie continues to empower women with the financial confidence, stability, and skills needed to build lasting personal and professional success.



CAESARS WINDSOR
CARES is proud to support WEST and the International Women's Day Gala.

We are committed to providing resources to strengthen our community where we live, work, and play and are taking measurable actions to ensure we are breaking the bias and fostering a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace.

PEOPLE
PLANET
PLAY.



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PERSEVERANCE AWARD

Sponsored by Attache Group

A partner working at the grassroots level for change, continuously promoting and educating about the value in inclusive spaces.



UHC- Hub of Opportunities

The UHC is a fully integrated service hub that brings 26 programs and services together under one roof, providing the essential skills, training, and supports individuals need to achieve their goals and build long-term stability. Each year, we serve an average of 50,000 unique clients across four locations in Windsor and one in Belle River, delivering a comprehensive range of supports tailored to the diverse needs of our community.

We also recognize that meaningful progress begins with stability. That is why we provide basic human-needs supports such as an onsite food bank, an energy assistance program, and our Coats for Kids initiative.

Food security is a central part of our work. We operate a range of innovative food initiatives, including a food rescue program, a farm-to-food program, and a community garden. We also serve as a regional hub supporting 14 food banks across Essex County and operate the Leamington Regional Food Hub, which facilitates large-scale food swaps and distribution, reaching an estimated four million people annually across Ontario and beyond. In addition, our state-of-the-art community kitchen serves as an offsite campus for the Greater Essex County District School Board. Through this partnership, co-op students develop hands-on culinary skills while preparing meals for the Victorian Order of Nurses Meals on Wheels program, earning high school credits while making a meaningful contribution to the community.

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DAPHNE V. CLARKE TRAILBLAZER AWARD

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Earnest Immigration and Citizenship Services Inc.

Founded and led by Amy, Earnest Immigration and Citizenship Services Inc. is a women-led immigration firm that has grown from a solo practice into a cross-border team of 15 professionals in under three years. With fivefold revenue growth and a team predominantly made up of women advancing in skilled roles, the firm is recognized for its leadership in both business excellence and gender equity.

Known for handling complex immigration matters—including humanitarian and asylum cases, appeals, and wrongful refusals—Earnest Immigration has helped countless clients move from uncertainty to opportunity. Under Amy's leadership, the firm has become Windsor-Essex's most awarded and trusted immigration practice, reversing the trend of residents seeking services outside the region.

Community impact is central to Earnest Immigration's mission. The firm actively partners with WEST to support mentorship, skills training, and employment pathways for immigrant women, while also providing pro bono services to refugees and asylum seekers from conflict zones. Through advocacy, equity-driven growth, and a commitment to dignity and access, Earnest Immigration continues to build pathways to opportunity while strengthening the Windsor-Essex community.



YES! WE CAN.

Over 75,000 women work in Ontario's construction industry. By 2033, 105,700 men and women age 30 and under are projected for recruitment province-wide. Since 2021, LiUNA!625 has shared a vital partnership with WEST, providing specialized construction skills training to 60 students considering a career path in the Red Seal Construction Craft Worker program or pursuing a specific job placement with a contractor.

Yes! You Can Get Your Career In Gear With LiUNA!

Construction Craft Worker Level I students shown left to right, Taylor Martin, Kayla Gallagher, Desiree Smith and Antonella Secreti are among an 18 Member apprenticeship class forming concrete walls at the Training Centre project yard, March 2025.



LiUNA!625

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DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION AWARD

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An individual committed to addressing anti-racism, social injustice, and gender inequality to create welcoming and inclusive spaces for all.

Mary Cifende Aganze



Mary Cifende Aganze is a dedicated social work professional, community leader, and advocate for social justice, with over a decade of experience supporting immigrant women, refugees, and vulnerable families. Born in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mary's journey as a refugee—spending nine years in Uganda before resettling in Canada—deeply shaped her commitment to empowerment, equity, and human rights.

Mary holds a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Windsor, along with additional credentials in mental health, community services, and public law. She currently serves as a Socio-Economic Integration Navigator at Collège Boréal, where she supports newcomers in setting goals and navigating education, employment, and life in Canada. She has also worked as a Settlement Worker, Instructor, and Community Liaison, helping immigrant families access housing, education, and essential supports.

In addition to her professional roles, Mary is the founder and Executive Director of Centre Maranata, a nonprofit organization supporting immigrant and refugee families in Windsor-Essex. Through initiatives such as Girls Power Likilimba, Mary has helped women—particularly Black and marginalized women—achieve financial independence through savings, mentorship, and access to homeownership.

Through her leadership, advocacy, and lived experience, Mary continues to create pathways to stability, dignity, and opportunity, empowering women and families to build secure futures and thrive within the community.



Celebrating
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GIVE TO GAIN AWARD

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UNIFOR Women in Trades



The women of UNIFOR Women in Trades are highly skilled professionals and dedicated community leaders who continue to break barriers and lead by example in the skilled trades. Among this year's outstanding nominees are Jennifer Jewell, a Construction and Maintenance Electrical Apprentice and recipient of the 2025 Skilled Trades Ontario Outstanding Apprentice Award; Erin Gouin, a Millwright at Stellantis and recipient of The Visionary Award at WEST's 2025 International Women's Day Gala; and Catherine Costello, a certified plumber and instructor at St. Clair College, where she inspires the next generation of trades professionals.

Employed at leading automotive companies, these women excel in their trades while actively mentoring others. Beyond the workplace, they generously contribute their time and expertise to community initiatives, including facility upgrades at Camp AK-O-Mak and promoting skilled trades through events such as Level Up!, Jill of All Trades, and Express to the Trades.

Balancing shift work, trade school, family life, and community service, these women consistently lead with dedication, resilience, and passion. Their commitment to lifting others makes them powerful role models and true champions for women in the skilled trades.

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026

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Bloomin' Gardener	La Marina by Eddy's Restaurant	The Little Greek House
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Caesars Windsor	Landmark Cinemas	The Richmond Popcorn Co.
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Ciao Caffè	Lungovita Beach Retreat	Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island
Colio Winery	Mackenzie Industrial & Safety	Vin Winery
Cooper's Hawk Winery	Macro Foods	Vintage & Vinyl
Coral Medical Health Spa	Marshalls	W.E. Ride & Dine Bus Tours
Dance Barre	Marzena Desrosier Real Estate	Walkerville Brewery
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Devonshire Mall	Michell Moxley Peltier	WestJet
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DS Electric	Nancy Johns Gallery & Framing	Windsor Express
Encore Productions of Windsor	North 42 Degrees Estate Winery	Windsor Pickleplex Social Club
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Full Circle Vintage	Power Traxx Electric	Windsor Symphony orchestra
Galaxy Records	Planet Fitness	Wolfhead Distillery & restaurant
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Encore Mechanical	Windsor Family Credit Union	Unique Communications Inc.	Foundation
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"This program has been very helpful for me. I have grown so much and learned so much about myself. My social worker has helped me in many ways since our first meeting. I hope this program continues to help others in the community." - AMANI client

Big news - French services are coming soon!



Scan to learn more!



Client's SUCCESS STORY

“My journey with the LEAD Program has been an incredibly rewarding experience. Before joining the program, I faced the challenge of transitioning from school to the professional world. Like many young graduates, I struggled with limited work experience and the uncertainty of how to effectively present myself to potential employers. I knew I needed guidance to bridge the gap between education and employment. The LEAD Program provided exactly that. Through its workshops, one-on-one support, and practical training, I gained the skills and confidence to navigate the job market. From resume writing to interview preparation, every aspect of the program was designed to set me up for success. The support of the staff and the encouragement I received along the way helped me overcome my fears and focus on building a strong foundation for my career. The LEAD Program has truly been a stepping stone toward achieving my dreams. I am grateful for the experience, the connections I’ve made, and the confidence I’ve gained to take on the future with optimism and determination.”

Nour - LEAD Participant



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TO THE WOMEN WHO LEAD, SUPPORT & INSPIRE OUR REGION—THANK YOU.

As we celebrate International Women's Day, we invite you to help shape the future of care in our community. Windsor Regional Hospital Foundation is recruiting volunteers to help fund life-saving equipment and support our patients.

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Client's SUCCESS STORY

“After my employment ended at my last job, I didn’t have a lot of answers about what was next for me. One of the only things I knew was that I wanted to transition out of the tech industry and into more local, meaningful work. WEST connected me with Ankita, who helped me translate the skills I developed in my previous job into a new community context, and she helped me see the connections and build confidence in that transition. I attended a job fair and got an interview through my WEST connections. I think these milestones served as important steps for me to practice my interviewing skills so that when the right position for me came along, I was able to perform my best. When I found my current position with the Downtown Windsor Community Collaborative, the WEST team truly celebrated that milestone with me. I appreciated that their support didn’t end once I found employment, and that they continued to check in and cheer me on. Now I’m lucky enough to get to work alongside WEST at some community events, I have an even deeper appreciation for how they empower and advocate for their clients. It’s been wonderful to see the full circle of their impact. “

Allison - IES Client



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Past

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



2025
HARRIET THORNHILL



2024
DR. PATRICIA FRANCE



2023
CAROLYN BROWN



2022
DR. BEVERLY JACOBS



2021
DR. PATRICIA FRANCE



2020
SAMRA ZAFAR



2019
MAJOR CATHERINE
WOLLOCOMBE



2018
DONNA WELLINGTON



2017
JACQUELINE LYANGA



2016
HON. DR. JEAN AUGUSTINE



2015
SAADIA MUZAFFAR



2014
STAFF SERGEANT
MAUREEN RUDALL



2013
HON. TERESA PIRUZZA



2012
SUKANYA PILLAY



2011
KAYE JOHNSON



2010
HON. SANDRA PUPATELLO



2009
HON. MADAM JUSTICE
MICHELINE A. RAWLINS



2008
EVELYN MYRIE



2007
DONNA MORO



2006
DR. EMILY CARASCO



2005
IRENE FRIEND



1997
SUSAN WELAN

Past AWARD WINNERS

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2025 Winners:

- **Youth Community Leadership Award:** Kristi Koutros
- **The Visionary Award:** Kaitlyn Ellsworth
- **The Phenomenal Woman Award:** Erin Gouin
- **The Sisterhood Award:** Aruna Koushik
- **Influencer Award:** Maria Ford Conliffe
- **Daphne V. Clarke Trailblazer Award:** Your Neighbourhood Credit Union
- **Perseverance Award:** Herma Brown
- **DEI Award:** Mike Hicks
- **New Partnership Partner:** ES Consulting
- **Accelerate Action Award:** AIS Technologies Group

2024 Winners:

- **Lifetime Achieve Award:** Dr. Patricia France
- **Catalyst for Change Award:** Ms. Sheila Barker
- **Youth Community Leadership Award:** Anne Rosete
- **The Visionary Award:** Derric'ka Talbot
- **Allyship Award:** EnerQuest Technologies Services Inc.
- **The Phenomenal Woman Award:** Dayna Eidukas-Mooney
- **The Sisterhood Award:** Family Services Windsor Essex
- **Influencer Award:** Kate Isley
- **Daphne V. Clarke Trailblazer Award:** LiUNA625
- **Perseverance Award:** EPICentre
- **DEI Award:** WEFC
- **New Partnership Partner:** Afrik Empire
- **The VIP Award: New Business Partner:** Off the Hook Paralegal
- **Equity and Inclusion Award:** Ashcon Construction Ltd.

2023 Winners:

- **The Innovation Award:** Faria Islam
- **Youth Community Leadership Award:** Tayler Diamond
- **The Visionary Award:** Ms. Lana Talbot
- **Allyship Award:** Lido Zuccato
- **The Phenomenal Woman Award:** Theresa Nguyen
- **The Sisterhood Award:** Nada Ayad
- **Influencer Award:** Rama Musharbash
- **Daphne V. Clarke Trailblazer Award:** Matthew House Refugee Welcome Centre
- **DEI Award:** Evelyn Myrie
- **New Excellence: Partnership Award:** WESUN
- **The VIP Award: New Business Partner:** Amico Affiliates
- **Embrace Equity Award:** Paul Davis

2022 Winners:

- **The Sisterhood Award:** Sungee John
- **The Phenomenal Woman Award:** Evon Karayan
- **The Trailblazer Award:** Maryan Amalov
- **New Excellence Partnership Award:** John Wigle
- **The Visionary Award:** Susan Taylor
- **The Innovation Award:** Priya Chana
- **The Influencer Award:** Marium Tolson-Murthy
- **DEI Award:** Bonnie Douglas
- **Perseverance Award:** Dr. Tariq Ali Khan

- **Break the Bias Award:** Bridging North America
- **Youth Community Leadership Award:** Fatima Al Hakim
- **Allyship Award:** Justin Falconer
- **New Business Partner Award:** Academy Truck Driving School
- **Perseverance Award:** Dr. Tariq Ali Khan
- **Break the Bias Award:** Bridging North America
- **Youth Community Leadership Award:** Fatima Al Hakim
- **Allyship Award:** Justin Falconer
- **New Business Partner Award:** Academy Truck Driving School

2021 Winners:

- **Sisterhood Award:** Sandra Istefan
- **The Phenomenal Woman Award:** Rebecca
- **The Trailblazer Award:** Reseau-femmes du Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario
- **New Business Partner Award:** Tejon Digital
- **The Visionary Award:** Art Gallery of Windsor
- **The Innovation Award:** Fadak Al Naely
- **The Influencer Award:** Women of Windsor
- **He Choose to Challenge Award:** Anthonia Abimbola Aborode

2020 Winners:

- **Sisterhood Award:** Diala Zaidan
- **The Phenomenal Woman Award:** Lisa Eybergen
- **The Trailblazer Award:** A Book of My Own
- **New Business Partner Award:** Enwin
- **The Visionary Award:** Michael Brown
- **The Innovation Award:** Bisma Sheraz
- **The Influencer Award:** Rebecca Saad

2019 Winners:

- **Sisterhood Award:** Lacy Carty
- **The Phenomenal Woman Award:** Jamie Campbell
- **The Trailblazer Award:** Mistermaid
- **New Business Partner Award:** Hotel Dieu Grace Healthcare
- **The Visionary Award:** Alpha Kappa Sorority Inc. Psi Delta Omega Chapter
- **The Innovation Award:** Saja Mefleh

2018 Winners:

- **Sisterhood Award:** Patricia Brown
- **The Phenomenal Woman Award:** Evian Kassab
- **The Trailblazer Award:** Laval International
- **The Trailblazer Award:** CommUnity Partnership
- **The Visionary Award:** Lindsay Angier
- **The Innovation Award:** Kylie Masse

2017 Winners

- **Sisterhood Award:** Terry Weymouth
- **The Phenomenal Woman Award:** Francisca Bakre
- **The Trailblazer Award:** HR Block
- **The Trailblazer Award:** AlphaKor
- **The Visionary Award:** Mona Stonefish
- **The Innovation Award:** Reem Al-Khulaidi
- **New VIP Partner Award:** Karen Pilon
- **Legacy Award:** Dr. Martha Reavley

2016 Winners:

- **Sisterhood Award:** Shantelle Browning-Morgan
- **The Phenomenal Woman Award:** Judith Obatusa
- **The Trailblazer Award:** DeMonte Fabricating Ltd.
- **The Trailblazer Award:** Centerline Ltd.
- **The Innovation Award:** Nour Hachem Fawaz
- **New Business Partner Award:** Sutherland Globel Services

2015 Winners:

- **Journey Towards Success Award:** Rama Elluru
- **Journey Towards Success Award:** Kateri Garvey
- **Community Partner Award:** Inna Turkova - AV Guage & Fixture Inc.
- **Community Partner Award:** Renee Turner - KPMG
- **Community Partner Award:** Eric Bialkowski -- Roth Mosey
- **Community Partner Award:** Beth Yeh - Roth Mosey
- **Community Partner Award:** Multiculture Council of Windsor & Essex County

2014 Winners:

- **Journey Towards Success Award:** Jennifer Cousineau
- **Community Partner Award:** Power Traxx Electric
- **Community Partner Award:** Odette Toastmasters

2013 Winners

- **Journey Towards Success Award:** Manju John
- **Community Partner Award:** The Tax Shop
- **Community Partner Award:** BASF Canada

2012 Winners:

- **Community Partner Award:** Human Resource Professionals Association
- **Community Partner Award:** Certified Mangement Accountants Ontario
- **Community Partner Award:** Maria Bekenkova

2011 Winners:

- **Journey Towards Success Award:** Magdalena Diaconu
- **Journey Towards Success Award:** Merita Katana
- **Community Partner Award:** St. Clair College
- **Community Partner Award:** Green Shield Canada

2010 Winners:

- **Journey Towards Success Award:** Doina Tintoi
- **Journey Towards Success Award:** Elsie Calumpang
- **Community Partner Award:** Champion Products
- **Community Partner Award:** BMO (Bank of Montreal)

THE WEST *Community*





Client's SUCCESS STORY

“As a newcomer to Canada, joining the EWE program at WEST has been one of the most impactful experiences in my career journey. The program not only helped me understand the Windsor job market but also gave me valuable insights into how to navigate it with confidence. The amazing staff at WEST were always supportive, approachable, and dedicated to helping us succeed.

Through the sessions, I was able to build meaningful connections with professionals and peers, which boosted my confidence and made me feel more prepared to pursue my career goals. A special mention goes to our program lead, Inana, whose guidance and personal connection with each participant truly made a difference. Her encouragement and commitment inspired us to give our best and stay motivated throughout the program.

I am deeply grateful to the entire EWE team for their efforts, mentorship, and continuous support. This experience has not only enhanced my professional skills but also strengthened my belief that with the right guidance and community, success as a newcomer is achievable. Thank you, WEST, for being a key part of my journey toward career growth and confidence.”

Tasmiya - EWE Client

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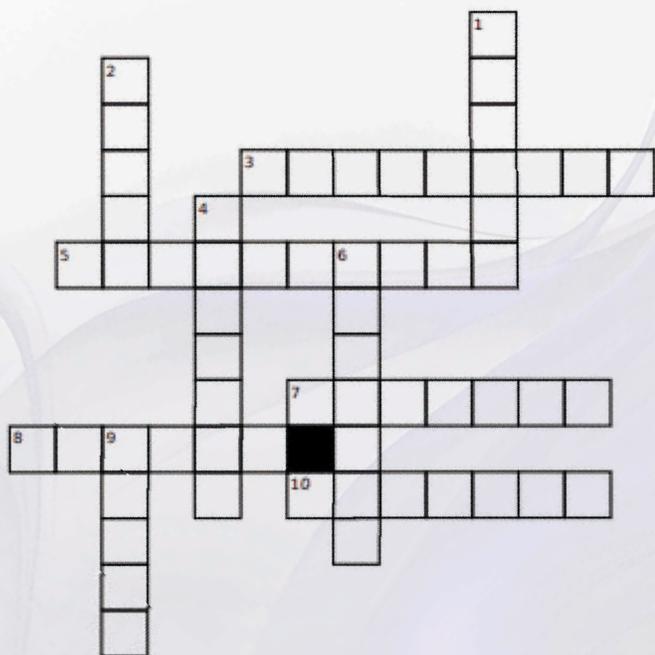
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International Women's Day Crossword



Across:

- 3. Working together for good
- 5. The power to keep going
- 7. Bravery to do what's right
- 8. Fairness in opportunity
- 10. People who guide and influence

Down:

- 1. Positive progress over time
- 2. Speaking up and being heard
- 4. Deep respect for every person
- 6. To encourage and uplift
- 9. Bringing people together

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