

Inspiration and Impact: A Look Back at Our Unforgettable AGM Weekend

Nothing beats connecting in person! This year's AGM hosted by CFUW Peterborough was a resounding success, seamlessly blending essential Council business with great food, games, education and community.

We checked major items off our list: approving a permanent Chair for Environment and Climate Change, passing an important resolution - *Minimizing the Negative Effects of Postpartum Depression*, reviewing the budget, and electing our new Board (thanks to Niki Carlan, self-nominated from the floor for Chair, Legislation and Sue Bailey, nominated from the floor for the new position of Chair, Environment and Climate Change). We successfully nominated and elected a floor-voted CRA (Diane Porteau, CFUW Orillia) to handle our year-end Financial Compilation Report. **Note that we still have three open positions (Secretary, RD East, and RD West).** (Thanks to Nominations Committee Chair, Sandra Thomson and her team for all the work undertaken to fill our Board positions.)

The weekend kicked off Friday night with Anne Cordon's "A Great Expedition," where table rotations helped us dive into the unique gifts and challenges of our individual Clubs. We then transitioned into a powerful Opening Ceremony featuring the Curve Lake Drum Circle, a Land Acknowledgement, and a moving Traditional Blessing by Shelley Knott. After greetings from Peterborough Mayor Jeff Leal, our returning President Sandra Shaw brought the house down with a standing-ovation speech. We wrapped up with Pam Hart sharing the poignant stories behind her residential school system commemorative quilt.

The night ended with a lively reception where the conversations flowed (and we noted for next time: arrange for more food!).

The momentum carried right into the next day. As the main AGM business wrapped up, we were treated to a data-driven presentation by Senator Donna Dasko, who highlighted the uniquely positive traits that set Canadian viewpoints apart on the global stage. We also heard from our National President, Linda

Sestock, and were thrilled to welcome CFUW national staff members Elizabeth Malcolm and Mabinty Toure, who joined us to learn more about the incredible work happening across Ontario Council and its Clubs.

Following lunch, members split up into highly engaging, practical educational sessions. The afternoon featured deep dives into building resilient, age-friendly communities, mastering the art of lobbying with "The Persuasion Game" (led by RD North Jane Cox), and strengthening relationships with our Indigenous sisters. Attendees also tackled the challenges and opportunities for women in politics during an expert panel discussion or explored the future of advocacy in a session on using AI as a tool (led by Elana Freeman).

We want to extend a huge thank you to everyone who purchased our new CFUW Ontario Council scarves! A special shout-out goes to Alanna Scanlon (CFUW Perth and District), who designed the scarf and took the time to share the beautiful inspiration behind her design; we are so thrilled you all love them. Thanks, too, to Val Johnson (CFUW Cornwall and District) for bringing her stunning 'CFUW beaded wrist jewelry' to sell; all proceeds from her sales are generously going directly to the Charitable Trust.

We closed out the weekend with a massive wave of gratitude. A huge thank you goes to our outgoing Board members, Anne Groulx, Carol Sproule, Linda Davis, Elisabeth Sachs, and Heather Conlin, for their incredible dedication and contributions to Ontario Council. At the same time, we are thrilled to welcome and wish the absolute best to our incoming new Board members: Heather Bailey, Sue Bailey, Elana Freeman, and Marlene Starkman.

Thank you to everyone who made this AGM an unforgettable weekend of connection, learning, and growth!