



West Island Women's Centre

Centre des Femmes West Island



**MEMBER'S GUIDE**

**7TH EDITION**

*July 2014*

*Serving the West Island and  
surrounding areas since 1975*

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### **Our Mission...**

The West Island Women's Centre (WIWC) is a non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of women.

To reach this objective, the Centre:

- offers educational, health-related and leisure courses and seminars,
- provides a support network for women,
- raises personal and community awareness,
- promotes women's issues.

### **Board of Directors**

#### **OFFICERS**

**Chair**

**Vice-Chair**

**Treasurer**

**Secretary**

**Past Chair (ex-officio)\***

#### **COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

**Programming/Seminars/Women's Issues**

(2 representatives)

**Newsletter/Publicity**

**Volunteers**

**Childcare**

**Fundraising/Special Events**

**Executive Director (ex-officio)\***

\*Ex-officio: Non-voting member

*7th Edition, July 2014*

*The West Island Women's Centre wishes to gratefully acknowledge  
Carol Meyers for producing this member's guide.*

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## **WELCOME TO THE WEST ISLAND WOMEN'S CENTRE**

The West Island Women's Centre has been serving the women of the West Island and surrounding areas since 1975. From its early beginnings through to the present day, our organization has been dedicated to fulfilling its mission of improving the quality of life of women.

Each year, the Centre serves over 600 members and many others through courses, seminars, wellness clinics, special events, and outreach activities (which include our popular evening support groups and programs for female teens, vulnerable families, and recent immigrants). We serve mothers of young children, women with part-time or full-time jobs outside the home, seniors, and women in financial difficulty. In essence, whatever a woman's age, family or financial situation, she will find a resource in the Women's Centre.

### **ABOUT THIS GUIDE . . .**

This membership guide contains information about many aspects of the West Island Women's Centre, including:

- Fire Emergency Procedures
- Members' Rights and Responsibilities
- Registration Procedures
- Refund Policy
- Special Arrangements for Women in Financial Difficulty
- The Childcare Service: Eligibility, Policies and Procedures

Whether you are a first-time or long-time member, this guide is for you.

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## HOW THE CENTRE WORKS . . .

Volunteers are at the heart of our organization. Our board of directors is composed of 11 volunteers including our past chair. The officers of the board are the chair, vice-chair, treasurer, secretary, and past chair. There are also six directors representing the following committees: programming; seminars/women's issues; childcare; fundraising/special events; newsletter/publicity; and volunteers. Throughout the year, the committee directors work with their respective committees to provide the Centre's programs, services, and activities. The executive director and the board's past chair attend board meetings as non-voting members.

The Centre has several permanent employees, including an executive director, accountant/office administrator, childcare supervisor, and programming and membership coordinator.

The executive director oversees the day-to-day operations of the Centre. Working in collaboration with staff and volunteers, she is responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of the mandate and policies of the organization. The executive director's duties include everything from assisting the Centre's committees to liaising with the media and major funders to writing grant applications and reports.

Our accountant/office administrator is responsible for many financial aspects of our organization. This includes maintaining the Centre's financial records, completing day-to-day transactions, and preparing payroll and financial statements.

The childcare supervisor oversees the operation of our free childcare service. Her duties include supervising the childcare staff, designing the educational and play activities for the children, actively participating in the care of the children, and ensuring a safe environment for all.

The programming and membership coordinator is responsible for answering all enquiries from current as well as prospective members. In addition, she supports the activities of the volunteer-run programming committee, manages our membership database, sends out news and information e-mails, and updates our website.

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In recent years, the Centre's staff has increased to accommodate an ever-expanding workload – both in the office and in our childcare rooms. Our community outreach coordinator is responsible for our organization's outreach programs and attends networking meetings and events in the community. Our fundraising and special events coordinator supports the volunteers of the fundraising committee and coordinates the Women's Centre's special events. Our bookkeeping assistant assists the accountant/office administrator with a number of financial tasks. Each year, a group of women are employed as part-time contract childcare workers in our free childcare service. Substitute childcare workers fill in as needed. Course instructors and facilitators for our outreach activities are hired on contract.

Our board of directors and staff aim to serve you, our membership. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. **Refer to the back cover of this manual for the Centre's contact information, including our e-mail address.**

When you join the West Island Women's Centre, you become part of a support network of women helping women. Enjoy your time with us!

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### OUR ACTIVITIES

#### *Daytime and Evening Courses*

The West Island Women's Centre is open from mid September to mid June. During that time, there are three sessions of courses offered: fall, winter and spring. Fall session courses typically last from 10 to 12 weeks. The winter session begins in January and runs for 10 weeks. The 7-week spring session runs from mid April until early June. Courses are offered Monday through Friday, in the morning, afternoon, and most evenings.

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### ***Daytime Workshop Series***

In addition to our courses, the Women's Centre offers workshops from time to time. These workshops are designed to provide useful, practical information on a defined topic. Examples of past workshops include parenting, self-image, legal matters, returning to work, and family nutrition. To help maintain the quality of our workshops and cover costs, workshop attendees are asked to make a suggested donation of \$5 per workshop. Members are permitted to bring one guest (non-member) to each workshop. Participants register for one workshop at a time. Registration usually takes place during the week prior to the workshop and is on a first-come, first-served basis.

### ***Fundraising/Special Events***

During the year, the Women's Centre organizes a number of special events, including our fall welcome event for new and returning members, children's Halloween party, International Women's Day celebration, and volunteer luncheon. There is at least one major fundraising event organized each year.

### ***Free Seminars/Wellness Clinics***

For our membership as well as the general public, the Centre offers Tuesday afternoon seminars and wellness clinics once or twice a month through the year. Designed to entertain, inform, and promote personal and social development, our seminars explore a wide variety of topics. Wellness clinics promote physical and psychological health and well being by exploring a range of topics — everything from family nutrition to dealing with depression. From time to time, seminars are offered in the evening as well.

### ***Outreach Programs***

Our outreach initiatives in the community include our very popular evening support group program, which helps women tackle specific problems or issues in their lives. The Centre now offers both weekly and monthly support groups.



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Another long-running outreach activity is “Time for Two,” an arts-and-crafts program for vulnerable families in our community. This activity takes place off site in an apartment rented for community organizations in Pointe-Claire.

In recent years, the Centre has introduced programs for female adolescents in local secondary schools on such subjects as cyber-bullying; sex and sexuality; and self-defence.

For recent immigrants, the Women’s Centre offers “Making New Connections.” The program is designed to help ease the transition for immigrants into their adopted country by offering practical information on everything from finding a job to understanding our education and health systems.

## **WHAT’S HAPPENING AROUND THE CENTRE? *KEEPING UP TO DATE***

The best way to keep up to date on current as well as upcoming programs, activities and events organized by the Women’s Centre is through the e-mail communications sent out regularly to our membership. **Please provide your e-mail address on your course and child-care registration form** to ensure that you stay informed. If you change your e-mail address, remember to let the WIWC office know. **For Women’s Centre news and information, you can also check our website ([www.wiwc.ca](http://www.wiwc.ca)) or Facebook page.**

The vast majority of our members gather the information they need (including course and registration information) via the Centre’s website. If you do not have access to a computer (internet, e-mail, etc.), the Centre will endeavour to keep you up to date by publicizing upcoming activities through notices around the Centre and occasional class announcements. In addition, paper copies of Women’s Centre publications are available upon request.

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## MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

All women interested in registering for courses at the West Island Women's Centre must first become members of our organization.

It is not necessary to be a West Island resident to join the Women's Centre. Although the majority of our members are West Islanders, each year we welcome members from other areas on the island of Montreal and beyond.

The minimum age for membership is 12 years. Young women 12 to 15 years old attending a daytime or evening course must be accompanied by an adult member.

## MEMBERSHIP FEES

The annual membership fee is \$25. Returning and new members joining the Centre for the fall session pay the annual membership fee upon registration. New members joining the Centre for our winter session pay a pro-rated fee of \$15. The pro-rated fee is reduced to \$10 for women joining our spring session.

**Please note that the membership fee is non-refundable.**

In late spring and early summer, non-members may pay a \$5 fee to join the Centre's mailing list. Though not yet members, women who join the mailing list receive the fall registration package and may pre-register for the fall session. *Please note that women wishing to join the mailing list after the Centre has closed in June for the summer must mail in the \$5 fee to our post office address before the designated deadline.*

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## WHEN A PERSON CAN JOIN THE WOMEN'S CENTRE

### *New Memberships from September to Late Spring:*

A woman may join the West Island Women's Centre any time from September to June except during the following black-out periods:

- **Mid/Late November to Winter Open Registration Day** (From just before the winter registration forms become available in November until the open registration day for the winter session.)
- **Late February/Early March to Spring Open Registration Day** (From just before the spring registration forms become available in late February/early March until the open registration day for the spring session.)

### *Mailing List Registrations from Late Spring/Summer:*

As mentioned above, non-members interested in participating in the coming year's activities may join our mailing list in the late spring/early summer. There is a black-out period when a person may not join the mailing list:

- **Late July to Fall Open Registration Day** (From a designated date in late July until the open registration day for the fall session.)

## WHERE OUR ACTIVITIES HAPPEN

In the fall of 2010, the West Island Women's Centre moved its operations to the large annex of St. Columba-by-the-Lake Church. Although the church address is 11 Rodney Avenue, **the Women's Centre's entrance is on Vincennes Avenue (the parking lot entrance).**

If you are standing in the church parking lot on Vincennes, the part of the building you see with long vertical windows is the Women's Centre's area. When you enter by the double glass doors (the parking lot en-

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trance), walking down the stairs brings you to the common area shared by the Women's Centre, church members, and other groups who use the building. On your right, there are coat racks and shelving for boots. These are available for our use, but if there is no space for your belongings, you can bring them inside the Women's Centre where you will find coat hooks and boot trays. We want to avoid overcrowding the common area with loose boots and articles of clothing.

Straight ahead is the men's washroom and the women's washroom to the left. If you turn towards the hallway on your left, you will see the church's kitchen. The kitchen is rented occasionally by the Women's Centre for classes and special events. Otherwise, the room is not at our disposal. Farther down this hallway and up the stairs are rooms used by the church and other groups. **Out of respect for the other users of the building, it is important to use the parking lot entrance and stay within the Women's Centre's area and the hallway and bathrooms we share in the common area.**

Two doors in the common area lead into the Women's Centre's part of the building. The door closest to the parking lot entrance connects to the gym, but it is not used. Instead, enter by our main entrance located in the middle of the hallway. Once inside, you will see the gym on your right. On the left is the main childcare room ("Childcare Room 1"). Continuing down the hallway, you will see on your left a second, smaller room that is used for classes and childcare. This is "Childcare Room 2." Turn left at the end of the hallway to find a small waiting area and stairs leading to the WIWC office. Farther up the stairs you will find the "Upstairs Classroom." This is the site of quite a number of courses — especially our personal development and children's art and music classes.

## OFFICE HOURS

The Centre is open from Monday to Friday. Our daytime hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 3 or 3:30 p.m. (depending on the afternoon course schedule) Please note that the Centre's doors are

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locked daily for one half hour — typically between 12:10 p.m. and 12:40 p.m. — for the staff lunch break.

If you need to reach any member of the board or would like more information about the Centre, our office staff will be happy to pass on your message or provide details. The telephone number for the WIWC office is 514-695-8529.

## **PARKING**

Free parking is available for members in the parking lot on Vincennes. Please keep in mind that the two spaces with a diagonal line through them near the doors are reserved for “Meals on Wheels” and other church volunteers. Please keep the space in the middle row closest to the building free so that cars in the row near the entrance can exit.

Parking is also available on the streets around the building. When parking on the street, please follow these guidelines:

- Watch for the “No Parking” signs and other parking restrictions.
- Be mindful of driveways and fire hydrants.
- Do not park your car in a location that will make it difficult for a neighbour to get out of his/her driveway.
- **Do not park on the grass and avoid turning in driveways.**

Thank you for your help in building harmony with our neighbours.

## **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

Because there are three distinct sessions of courses, a member will register for each session separately at designated times. Current members have the privilege of being able to pre-register for the courses for the upcoming session. For the fall session, this privilege is also extended to women who have joined our mailing list. Because many of the Women’s

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Centre's popular courses tend to fill up quickly, most members opt to **pre-register for their courses**. Course descriptions, prices, and registration information are available on our website several weeks before registration takes place.

Members receive their registration forms prior to pre-registration. For the fall session, the forms are sent out to members (and those who have joined our mailing list) in August. For the winter and spring sessions, the forms are distributed at the Centre. **Although available in advance of the pre-registration sessions, absolutely no registration forms are accepted before the pre-registration sessions.**

**All registration forms are processed strictly on a first come, first served basis.** In the event that you **do not** get in a class, you will be notified before the open registration day for new members.

## **PRE-REGISTRATION SESSIONS**

In-person pre-registration sessions are held **at the Centre** during the day and in the evening. These sessions give all current members the opportunity to sign up for the new session on the opening day of pre-registration.

The pre-registration sessions for the fall session take place at the end of the summer break (late August/early September); for the winter, they take place in late November/early December; and for the spring, in March. Members are notified of the date and time of the pre-registration sessions via e-mail messages and notices posted around the Centre.

It is possible for a member to register for **one** other member at the pre-registration sessions with the following exceptions:

- **Women who volunteer at the pre-registration sessions may not register for any person other than themselves.**
- **Women's Centre staff scheduled to work during the pre-registration sessions are not permitted to register for anyone else.**

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In the interest of fairness to all, the Centre will not accept more than two registration forms per person. If you are registering for another person, please bring a separate cheque (one cheque per registration form).

If you cannot attend the daytime pre-registration session(s), you also have the option of sending someone in your place or attending the evening session.

### **At the Pre-Registration Sessions: Tickets for Popular Courses**

If you are planning to pre-register for one of our very popular courses, you will receive a course ticket when you arrive at pre-registration. The tickets are a way for the programming committee to track registration for courses that tend to fill up quickly. The ticket system also reduces the problem of members paying for courses that are already full, and having to wait for a refund cheque.

If you are registering for a friend, **make sure you also get tickets for your friend's courses.**

Tickets are distributed in numerical order from the first to the last spot in the course. If you receive a ticket for a course, it is very likely that you have successfully registered for that course. However, please keep in mind that errors do sometimes occur and that the course confirmation form sent out once the registrations have been processed is the best indication that you have successfully registered for a course.

Please do not fill out your cheque before you come to the pre-registration sessions so that you can avoid paying for a course that is already full.

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## **PRE-REGISTERING AFTER THE PRE-REGISTRATION SESSIONS**

Starting the day following the pre-registration sessions, members who did not pre-register can mail in their registration papers to the Centre or drop them off at the WIWC office during office hours. The registration forms will be processed according to the day and time they reach the office.

Registration forms for the winter and spring sessions that were not picked up by members are sent out the day after the pre-registration sessions. If you receive your winter or spring registration forms after the pre-registration sessions, please bring in your completed forms to the office or mail them as soon as possible.

**Members must take note of the specific day and time when the pre-registration period ends for each session.** Registration forms received by the office (either by mail or in person) after that day and time are no longer eligible for pre-registration. If you miss the pre-registration period, **your next opportunity to register for the new session will be at the registration sessions for new members.** If you mistakenly submit your forms during the black-out period between pre-registration and open registration, it is your responsibility to collect your forms and keep them until the time when registration is once again possible.



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## DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION

To successfully register, you must submit the following:

- **COURSE AND CHILDCARE REGISTRATION FORM**  
(each session)
- **MEMBERSHIP/CHILD REGISTRATION FORM**  
(once a year)  
*All women who join the Centre complete a **membership form**. Members who bring children to the Centre for courses and/or childcare must also complete the **child registration form**, located on the other side of the membership form. This is where you provide medical/allergy information about your children. The form also includes waivers for outside play and photographs.*
- **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT FORM** (once a year)  
*Please Note: All Women’s Centre members are required to complete a **volunteer recruitment form** each year. This mandatory requirement was adopted by the Centre’s board of directors in order to ensure the continued viability of our volunteer-run organization. Therefore, be sure to submit your recruitment form along with the rest of your registration papers. Failure to do so may delay the processing of your registration.*
- **YOUR PAYMENT IN FULL** (See the “Payment for Courses” section below.)

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## **PAYMENT FOR COURSES**

All registration forms must be accompanied by payment in full. Payment is by cheque or cash (exact change preferred). **Please remember that we do not accept credit cards or debit cards.** The preferred method of payment is by cheque.

- **Cheques must have the current date. (No post-dated cheques please.)**
- Cheques must be made payable to **W.I.W.C.**
- Cheques from a United States or any other foreign bank account are not accepted.
- If you are also registering for a friend, **please submit two separate cheques** (one cheque per registration form).
- Please do not staple or tape your cheque to the registration form.

**Please Note: All fees for returned cheques will be deferred to the member. An administrative charge will also be applied.**

## **TRYING OUT A CLASS OR BRINGING ALONG A GUEST IS NOT PERMITTED**

Only those members who have registered for a class may attend it. Therefore, it is not possible to try out or sample a class. The Centre also does not allow guests to attend — so if you have an out-of-town guest or friend visiting, she may not accompany you to your class.

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## **SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR WOMEN IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY**

Women in financial difficulty may request to have the fees waived for some Women's Centre courses as well as their membership, as described below.

### *Personal Development / Wellness Courses*

Any woman experiencing financial difficulties may request to have the fees waived for **up to two** personal development/wellness courses. Requests to have the fees waived for **three or more** personal development/wellness courses require the approval of the WIWC Board of Directors.

### *Fees for Courses outside of the Personal Development / Wellness Category*

A woman in financial difficulty may request **one course** outside of the personal development/wellness category if there is space available in the desired course after the open registration sessions for new members have occurred. *It is important to remember that there are often additional costs associated with special interest courses such as materials fees or art / craft supplies. These fees must be paid by the course participant.*

### *Membership Fees*

Depending on the financial circumstances of the individual, she may pay a nominal amount for her annual membership fee or the fee may be waived entirely.

### *How to Apply*

All requests for the waiving of course or membership fees must be made in writing. In addition, members wishing to have course/membership fees waived need to provide the appropriate documentation to the West Island Women's Centre. For further information, please call the WIWC office at 514-695-8529.

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## OPEN REGISTRATION DAYS

There is an open registration day for new members each session. At open registration, women register in those courses that still have spaces available.

Registration must be made in person only. However, new members who are not available during the time of open registration may send someone in their place. As with our pre-registration sessions, no more than two registration forms will be accepted from each person. **Phone registrations are not accepted.**

## LATE REGISTRATION

Late registrations will be accepted **until the second class of a course has taken place** provided there is space in both the requested course and the childcare service (if this service is required). **Payment must be made by cheque or cash.**

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

To better serve our members, there is a “Persons to Contact in Case of Emergency” section on the course and childcare registration form. Please take the time to provide us with two names and numbers to contact in case of emergency. We would like to have emergency contacts for all of our members—even those who do not use our childcare service. Rest assured that your emergency contact information will only be used if absolutely necessary.

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## CHILDCARE REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

The Women's Centre's free childcare service is highly valued by our members. It enables mothers with preschool-aged children to participate in our daytime courses and activities. The service is available for all registered children from birth to 5 years.

In recent years, the Women's Centre has expanded the scope of the childcare service to better serve the changing needs of our membership. The service is now available on pedagogical days and for occasional use. Members are requested to pay a suggested donation for these extra services.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDCARE

There is no minimum age for the childcare service. In fact, our childcare team has cared for babies as young as two weeks. On the other end of the spectrum, 5-year-olds may be registered for childcare until they are eligible to attend kindergarten in Quebec. If, for example, a child turns five in October and is not attending kindergarten, he/she may remain in childcare and participate in children's courses until the Centre closes in June. In addition, children up to 8 years of age can be registered for our PED day or occasional childcare.

### REGISTERING YOUR CHILDREN

All members intending to use our childcare service while taking courses are required to register their preschool-aged children in the space provided on the **course and childcare registration form**.

***Please note: It is necessary to register your children for childcare each session.***

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## REGISTRATION PROCEDURES FOR BABYSAT CHILDREN

If you regularly babysit children and intend to enroll them in a class or bring them to childcare, it is important to keep in mind that the mother/legal guardian of the child must become a member of the Centre.

In addition, if the babysat child will be in childcare, the mother/legal guardian must complete a special childcare registration form. For more information, please get in touch with the WIWC office (514-695-8529).

### BEFORE YOU REGISTER: EVALUATE YOUR NEEDS

Please think carefully about your childcare needs. In the interest of fairness to all, please register your children for childcare **only if you are certain you will use the service regularly**. It is very unfortunate when members are unable to enroll in courses because the childcare service is full. This is especially troublesome when some members who do register for childcare do not end up using the service regularly.

The Women's Centre's goal is to ensure that women who really need this important service are able to benefit from it. We will follow up with members who do not use the service in the way it was intended. Therefore, please keep the following in mind when registering for the service.

#### *Do I really need to register my child for childcare?*

If, for example, you have other childcare arrangements at your disposal such as a family member at home who is always available to mind your child, an ongoing babysitting arrangement, or a place for the child in a daycare, **please do not register your child for the WIWC childcare service**. If you register for the service anyway, you are reducing the number of childcare spaces available to women who are really counting on the service.

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*Will I use the childcare service regularly?*

Will you attend your classes regularly? Do you already know that you are going to miss a significant part of the session? These are questions to consider before you sign up your child for childcare. Of course, there will be days when you will not be able to attend the Centre because of an unforeseen circumstance — when, for example, a child is sick or the car will not start. These unavoidable absences are completely understandable.

As is explained below, members are required to telephone or e-mail to cancel their spot if they will not need childcare on a given day.

*Consequences for Members Who Misuse the Childcare Service*

**If You Do Not Call to Cancel Childcare on a Day You Will Not Need It:**

- *The first time you do not call or e-mail* to cancel your childcare spot, you will receive a verbal reminder from the childcare supervisor. You will also be asked to donate \$1.00 per child to the “Baby Kitty” to help defray the cost of new toys and materials.
- *The second time you do not call or e-mail* to cancel your childcare spot within the same session, you will receive written notification from WIWC staff. Again, you will also be asked to donate \$1.00 per child to the “Baby Kitty” to help defray the cost of new toys and materials.
- *The third time you do not call or e-mail* to cancel your childcare spot within the same session, you will be notified in writing that you have lost the privilege of using childcare for the remainder of that session.

**If You Chronically Cancel Your Childcare Spots:**

If at the end of a session, it has been noted that you have cancelled your childcare spots a large number of times (even if you have called the Cen-

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tre on every occasion), a member of the WIWC staff will get in touch with you to discuss your childcare needs.

## **YOUR CHILD'S MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Please help us to keep your children healthy and safe at the Women's Centre by making sure you provide up-to-date information about your children's medical needs/concerns on the child registration form. If there have been any changes to your child's medical information, please inform **the WIWC staff by calling 514-695-8529**.

## **EMERGENCY WAIVER FOR CHILDREN WITH EPIPENS**

In our continued effort to ensure the safety and security of all the children in our childcare service, members whose children carry an Epipen are asked to complete a special waiver form. The form grants the childcare supervisor and the childcare workers permission to administer the Epipen if required.

In addition, we require members who have a child with a special medical condition (such as a life-threatening allergy or asthma) to provide a photograph of the child. We will place the photo (and, if required, the Epipen) in an area of the childcare room that is readily accessible to all the childcare workers. This is an established practice in preschools and elementary schools.



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## CHILDCARE POLICIES

1. **School-age children** will not be accommodated in childcare with the following exceptions:
  - On pedagogical (PED) days, children 8 years of age or younger may be registered for childcare on a first come, first served basis provided there is space available in the childcare service on that day at the requested time. *For more information, please see the section on PED Day Registration Procedures below.*
  - Children 8 years of age or younger may be registered for occasional childcare on a first come, first served basis provided there is space available in the childcare service on that day at the requested time. *For more information, please see the section on Occasional Childcare Registration Procedures below.*
  - Board members and committee members may bring their school-aged children to childcare while they attend meetings or perform other volunteer work for the Centre on a day when the children are not attending school.
  - On extremely rare occasions, members may bring their school-aged children to childcare during a special event held at the Centre. Members will be informed in advance when childcare for school-aged children is available.

Please remember that children who are five years of age may be registered for our regular childcare service provided that they are not yet eligible to attend school in Quebec.

2. With a few exceptions, children of non-members or members' children **who are not registered for that session cannot be accommodated in childcare.** The exceptions occur when non-members register for childcare for daytime outreach activities, free seminars, and special events or members use the occasional childcare option.

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3. Members are not allowed to bring other members' children to childcare. Exception: Pre-Authorized babysat children—see the following policy.
  4. Pre-Authorized Babysat Children: Members who regularly babysit children may register the babysat child(ren) for childcare provided that the following conditions are met:
    - The mother/legal guardian of the babysat child(ren) must become a member of the Centre.
    - The mother/legal guardian of the babysat child(ren) must sign a waiver form that explains the policies and procedures governing the use of the West Island Women's Centre's childcare service and outlines the babysitter's responsibility with respect to the babysat child(ren) while they are in childcare at the Centre.
  5. In order for members to enjoy the class without interruption, **CHILDREN ARE NOT PERMITTED TO ACCOMPANY MEMBERS TO CLASS.** (No exceptions are allowed.)
  6. No unauthorized persons are permitted in the childcare rooms unless approved by the childcare supervisor. *For the security of all, only those adults who have been hired to care for our children are permitted in the childcare room.*

## **PED DAY REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

The childcare service offers a limited number of spaces for school-aged children **8 years of age or younger** on pedagogical days while their mothers attend classes at the Centre. Spaces are filled on a first come, first served basis. Follow these steps to register your child:

- E-mail Childcare Supervisor Iva Rooney at [iva.rooney@wiwc.ca](mailto:iva.rooney@wiwc.ca) to reserve a spot for your child. You may reserve the spot up to one week in advance of the scheduled PED day.

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- Fill in a PED Day registration form for your child(ren).
  - You are asked to make a suggested donation of \$3 for the first child and \$2 for each additional child.

Members must register their own children — please do not register on behalf of someone else or bring along someone else’s child.

***IMPORTANT: If you are not able to use the Centre’s PED Day service, you must make other childcare arrangements for your school-aged children. REMEMBER THAT YOU CANNOT BRING YOUR CHILD TO CLASS (POLICY 5 ABOVE) OR LEAVE YOUR CHILD UNATTENDED OUTSIDE YOUR CLASS OR IN THE OFFICE.***

## **OCCASIONAL CHILDCARE REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

Members may request temporary childcare for children from **birth to 8 years** not registered for our childcare service for the following reasons:

- When the child’s usual activity/childcare arrangement is not available. Possible reasons for this occasional use include a preschool holiday; a daycare holiday; or the temporary unavailability of the usual childcare arrangement. Members are encouraged to request the childcare service **on an emergency basis and only when no other childcare option is available.**
- When the child is the younger sibling of a child participating in a course on his/her own at the Centre.

Spaces will be filled on a first come, first served basis and will depend on childcare availability.

Please note the following:

- The service is only available for current members for their own chil-

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dren while they are either **participating in courses** or **waiting during a children’s course** at the Centre.

- The member must remain on the premises at all times while her child is in childcare.
- Sick children are not accepted in the childcare service and those deemed sick upon arrival will be turned away. If the child is sick on the day he/she is registered for occasional childcare, then the spot must be cancelled. If the member does not cancel the spot, a \$1.00 donation per child will be requested.

Follow these steps to register your child for occasional childcare.

- E-mail Childcare Supervisor Iva Rooney at [iva.rooney@wiwc.ca](mailto:iva.rooney@wiwc.ca) **the evening before or between 7 and 9 a.m. on the day you need the childcare.** Note that you may not request this service any earlier than the evening before. This is because a spot for your child **will only be available if someone has cancelled a childcare spot.** This allows the childcare service to maintain the appropriate child to childcare worker ratio.
- You will receive an e-mail response from the childcare supervisor **on the morning of the requested day.** Remember that we can only accept your child if there is space in childcare at that time.
- You will need to complete an “Occasional Childcare Registration Form and Waiver” when you drop off your child.
- You are requested to pay a suggested donation of \$3 for the first child and \$2 for each additional child.

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## CHILDCARE RULES & REGULATIONS

### CANCELLING YOUR SPOT

If your child(ren) will not need childcare on any given day, **YOU ARE REQUIRED** to phone 514-695-8529 or e-mail [iva.rooney@wiwc.ca](mailto:iva.rooney@wiwc.ca) as soon as possible to cancel the spot. Knowing how many children to expect allows the childcare staff to adapt their program and work schedule. When you call or e-mail, please give the reason for the cancellation.

**Any member who forgets to call or e-mail to cancel will be asked to donate \$1.00 per child to a “Baby Kitty” to help defray the cost of new toys and materials.** Remember that if you repeatedly forget to notify us, you will lose your childcare privileges.

### ARRIVING FOR CHILDCARE

Members are asked to drop off their children with a childcare worker at the entrance to the childcare room. If you are brand new to the Centre and childcare, you may bring your child into the childcare room the first week. After the first week, new members should also drop off their children at the door. Please do not bring your child any earlier than 5 minutes before your class is scheduled to begin. It is very difficult for the Centre to accommodate early birds. **Experience has shown that it is best for parents not to enter or linger in the childcare room.** It can be very upsetting for the newly arrived children when mothers and children linger in the childcare room.

Please make an extra effort to arrive for your classes on time if you are bringing children to the childcare service. It can be upsetting to the children already in childcare when a mother appears at the door some time after their own mothers have left. They start to expect their mothers to come to collect them and understandably get upset when that does not happen.

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## PARENTS MUST REMAIN ON THE PREMISES

**Parents must remain in the building while their children are in class or in the childcare room.** Note that mothers participating in off-site courses (“Stroller Fit” for example) are asked to sign a special waiver if they are using the childcare service.

## SNACK TIME

Please bring in snacks for your child if he/she will be in childcare on the following days and times:

- **Monday through Friday mornings** *if your child will be in childcare for a full two hours*
- **Monday through Friday afternoons**

If your child really wants to have his/her snack at the Centre even though he/she will not be at the Centre for two hours, we will certainly accommodate this. And, of course, we will be happy to give your young child a bottle outside the official snack times if necessary.

## APPROPRIATE SNACK ITEMS

When packing a snack for your child, remember to label any food or drink (baby bottles included) you bring with your child’s last name. If you forget to label your child’s items, you will find labels and a pen on the bookshelf outside the childcare room. Food should be in a **labelled disposable bag or plastic container**. Suggested snacks:

- Baked “fishy” crackers
- Any other type of plain crackers
- Cut-up fruit (**but no grapes please**)

*Absolutely no snack products with nuts are permitted.*

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## DIAPER CHANGES

Moms with babies can bring in a labelled diaper bag to the childcare room. Unless otherwise informed, the childcare workers will change diapers. Please keep a few extras in your diaper bag. If you do change your child's diaper at the Centre, please **do not dispose of the diaper on church premises**. You can bring the diaper to the childcare room and the staff will dispose of it or you can bring it home with you.

## PICKING UP YOUR CHILDREN

Here are the golden rules for picking up your children from childcare:

1. Please go to the childcare room to collect your children as soon as your class ends and leave the area promptly. The changeover time between classes can be quite hectic so we really appreciate your cooperation.
2. Remember that the moment you pick up your children from childcare, they become your responsibility. In other words, once the childcare workers have handed over your children, you must keep a watchful eye on them.

## STROLLERS, WAGONS, BICYCLES, ETC.

Please do not bring strollers, wagons, bicycles, etc., inside the building. These items can be a dangerous obstacle for adults and children when left in the entrances or hallways. Please also be sure to leave the space clear outside the building along the entrance pathways.

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## PLEASE BRING SHOES FOR YOUR CHILD

If your child is of walking age, please make sure he or she has a pair of shoes to wear while in childcare. Should there ever be an emergency and we have to evacuate the building, it is very important that all of the children have shoes.

## DO NOT BRING TOYS OR OTHER OBJECTS FROM HOME

Please ensure that your child does not bring objects from home into the childcare room. This includes chewing gum and coins, which are both safety hazards. It is also important that your child does not bring toys from home. Often these toys get misplaced or cause disputes among the children.

## ILLNESS

Help us to keep the spread of illness to a minimum. **Children with fevers, rashes, coughs, or colds should not be brought to the Centre.** Remember to notify the Centre by telephone (514-695-8529) or e-mail ([iva.rooney@wiwc.ca](mailto:iva.rooney@wiwc.ca)) as soon as possible if you need to cancel your spot.

### *Not Sure Whether Your Child Is too Sick to Come to the Centre?*

It is okay to bring a child to the Centre if he/she has a runny nose with clear secretions. However, please do not bring your child if the nose secretions are mucousy and not clear. **Do not bring your child if he or she has a cough.** If you suspect your child has a fever coming on, please keep your child at home. We would like to do our best to keep the spread of illness to a minimum.

And, of course, you are not permitted to bring a sick child to the Centre because he/she is too sick to go to his/her other activity. If a child is too



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sick for daycare/preschool, he/she is also too sick to come to our childcare service.

## **INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY**

In the best interest of everyone, we ask that our members inform us of any cases of infectious diseases (i.e. chicken pox, fifth disease, etc.). When infectious diseases are reported, we will inform our members by e-mail. This is intended only as an information service to our members, and we cannot guarantee we will have knowledge of every case. The West Island Women's Centre cannot be held responsible should anyone be exposed to an infectious disease.

## **HELPING CHILDREN WITH SEPARATION OR BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES**

If you are using our childcare service for the first time (particularly if you have only left your child in the care of family members), it is completely understandable that you or your child may find the first days in childcare a little daunting. Rest assured, however, that the childcare staff will do everything they can to make your child's stay a very positive experience. They will do their best to help you and your child settle in to this new routine. The best advice we can give mothers new to our childcare service is "Don't give up!" Experience tells us that before long, both you and your child will look forward to his/her time with us.

When a child in our care has difficulty following the childcare rules, behaves in a way that might jeopardize his/her safety or that of the other children, or struggles to get along with the other children, the childcare team will use a number of strategies to deal with the situation.

**Step 1:** The child is separated from the group so that one of the childcare workers can have a little talk with him/her. The childcare worker will explain the problem and help the child find a more appropriate way to behave.

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**Step 2:** The childcare worker(s) or childcare supervisor will discuss the problem with the mother. Together, they will work on developing a strategy to address the problem.

**Step 3:** If the behaviour persists, the child will be given a time-out.

**Step 4:** If the first three strategies do not work, the mother/guardian will be asked to temporarily forgo some or all of her class time to accompany his/her child in the childcare room to work with the childcare workers on a solution to the problem.

*If you have any questions about our childcare service, please get in touch with our childcare supervisor by e-mailing [iva.rooney@wiwc.ca](mailto:iva.rooney@wiwc.ca) or calling 514-695-8529, Ext. 205.*

*Suggestions are always welcome! Written suggestions can be left in the office for the Childcare Director. We thank you for your cooperation.*

## **FIRE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

You can never be too prepared for emergencies. Please take a few moments to read over this important information.

### **BUILDING EXITS**

When evacuating the building, the closest exits are:

- The parking lot entrance on Vincennes Avenue.
- The north door, which is located in the stairwell leading to the Upstairs Classroom.
- The east door on Rodney Avenue near the St. Columba church offices. To access this door, exit the Women's Centre's main hallway entrance and turn right. Pass the washrooms and the kitchen entrance. The stairwell leading to this exit is on your right.

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### **SAFE ZONES**

For each exit, there is a designated “safe zone” where the childcare workers, children, and class participants will gather.

<b>Exit</b>	<b>Safe Zone</b>
Parking lot entrance on Vincennes	The large tree on the hill near Vincennes Avenue.
North Door	On the grass to the left, near Rodney Avenue.
Rodney Exit (church offices)	On the grass near Rodney Avenue.

### **LOCATION OF THE ALARM PULL STATIONS (TO TURN ON THE FIRE ALARM)**

<b>General Area</b>	<b>Specific Location</b>
Parking lot entrance on Vincennes	Along the wall above the staircase that leads down from the parking lot entrance.
Women’s Centre’s main hallway	Left of the office windows (before you turn the corner to the waiting area).
Stairwell to the Upstairs Classroom	Beside the north door.
Stairwell to the Upstairs Classroom	Upstairs just outside the classroom door.

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## **LOCATION OF THE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

<b>General Area</b>	<b>Specific Location</b>
Main Childcare Room	Near the sink.
Gym	On the north wall (near the door to the storage room).
WIWC office	On the wall to your right as you enter the room (behind the door).
Upstairs Classroom	On the wall on your right as you enter the room.

If you bring children to our childcare service, it is important to know that the childcare workers have a clear protocol to follow in the case of a fire emergency. It is as follows:

- The childcare team will choose the nearest safe exit.
- The team will lead the children in a single file out of the room. (Remember that all children of walking age should have shoes in childcare at all times.) One worker will be at the front of the line; a second worker will be at the back of the line. Extra workers guide the line along. Babies are carried in the workers' arms or in their carriers.
- The group will proceed to the safe zone, making sure they are as far as they can be from the point of danger.
- Moms will meet the group at the safe zone to pick up their children. (The childcare team will stay with the children until every last child is picked up.)

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What is your role as a member to ensure that our fire emergency plan runs smoothly? Follow these important steps:

1. Evacuate the building immediately by the nearest safe exit and go to the safe zone.
2. **If you have children in childcare, YOU CANNOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES GO INTO THE CHILDCARE ROOM TO SEARCH FOR YOUR CHILD(REN). The children are being evacuated from the building by the childcare team and will be expecting you outside at one of the safe zones.**
3. Once outside, mothers/legal guardians go to the safe zone and pick up their children from the childcare workers. Make sure the childcare worker or the childcare supervisor is aware that you are leaving with your child(ren).
4. If you do not have children in childcare, stay in the safe zone with your class until you hear further news.

We take the safety of our members and their children very seriously. Please think about your role in our fire emergency plan and the next time you are at the Women's Centre, take a fresh look at your surroundings. Check for the location of the fire exits, fire extinguishers, and fire alarm pull stations. Your understanding and commitment to our fire safety measures are vital.

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## **EMERGENCY CLOSURE OF THE WEST ISLAND WOMEN'S CENTRE**

The West Island Women's Centre will close temporarily if one or several of the following situations arises:

- The Lester B. Pearson and/or Marguerite Bourgeoys school boards have closed due to extreme weather conditions or an emergency situation.
- The Centre has been without electric power and/or water for a significant period of time.
- A situation arises where the safety and/or health of our members and staff may be compromised.

The decision to temporarily close the Centre will be made at least one half hour prior to the scheduled start of classes, in the morning, afternoon, or evening.

If courses have been cancelled for any of the above-mentioned reasons, the Centre will do the following:

- Send an e-mail notice to members.
- Post a notice on our website and Facebook page.
- Update our phone message with news of the cancellation.

If you do not have access to the Internet and are wondering if your course has been cancelled, please do not hesitate to call the office (514-695-8529). Cancelled classes are re-scheduled at the end of the session, during the make-up weeks.

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## **MEMBERS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The West Island Women's Centre believes that membership at the Centre gives our members certain rights and responsibilities. The basic principles are described below.

### **Everyone is entitled to be treated with *respect*.**

All members, instructors and support staff may expect to treat one another with the respect to which each is entitled.

### **Everyone has an *equal right to enjoy and benefit from the West Island Women's Centre's activities*.**

Each individual has needs and deserves to be heard. However, each individual must also recognize that other members have an equal right to be heard and have their needs addressed as well.

### **Everyone is entitled to expect an *atmosphere conducive to personal growth and mutual support*.**

The activities of the West Island Women's Centre are meant to foster the personal growth and development of all who participate. When in the context of a group discussion a member brings up matters that are personal or private in nature, other members are encouraged to support and not judge that member. Each member is entitled to be listened to with respect.

### **Everyone must respect our *physical environment*.**

The premises where our courses are held should be respected at all times. In addition, all property and equipment belonging to the premises or the West Island Women's Centre should be respected at all times.

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## REFUND POLICY

It can happen that a member must withdraw from a Women's Centre course for medical or other reasons. The WIWC Refund Policy is as follows:

### 1. MEDICAL REFUNDS

A member may request a refund for the participant of a course because of a medical reason **up until the third class has taken place**. The member will be reimbursed for the remaining classes provided that a note from a medical professional is provided. All paperwork must be received by the office before the end of the session.

*If you must opt out of a course for a medical reason, please be sure to notify the office as soon as possible.*

### 2. OTHER REFUNDS

#### 2.1 *During the Pre-registration Period: Non-Processed Registration Forms*

A member requesting a refund for a course for non-medical reasons during the pre-registration period before open registration day will be granted a full refund provided that her registration form has not been processed.

*Note that the forms are processed very soon after the pre-registration sessions so it is quite rare to be eligible for this type of refund.*

#### 2.2 *During the Pre-registration Period: Processed Registration Forms*

A member requesting a refund for a course for non-medical reasons during the pre-registration period before open registration day whose registration form has been processed will be issued a



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refund for the cost of the course minus an administration fee.

*Once the registration form has been processed, there is considerably more work involved when a person requests to opt out of a course. The class lists need to be altered and arrangements made to try to fill the newly-vacated spot. Therefore, an administration fee will be charged.*

### 2.3 *After Open Registration Day and before the Session Starts*

A member requesting a refund for non-medical reasons after open registration day and prior to the commencement of the session will be granted a partial refund (the cost of the course minus an administration fee) **provided that her spot can be filled from the waiting list.**

*In other words, once open registration day has passed, you will receive a partial refund only if your spot can be filled.*

### 2.4 *After the Session has Begun*

Once the session has begun, a member requesting a refund before the end of the second class for non-medical reasons will be reimbursed for the remaining classes **provided that her spot can be filled.** An administration fee will be applied. **No refunds will be issued after the second class has taken place.**

*It has been the Centre's experience that it is not always possible to fill a space once the session has begun — even when there is a long waiting list for the course. People's plans change or they sometimes are not as eager to join a course that is already underway.*

## LATE REGISTRATION

### a. *Waiting List*

A member who registers for a course after being on the waiting list for that course will pay a pro-rated fee for the remaining classes.

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**b. *New Registrations***

A member enrolling in a course already in progress will pay the full fee if she joins at the second class. Remember: No registrations are accepted once the second class has taken place.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES**

- Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) Cheques: An administration fee of \$5.00 in addition to the bank charge will be charged to the member.
- An administration fee of \$5.00 will be charged to members granted a refund for a course for non-medical reasons if the registration form has already been processed. (*Policies 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 above.*)

## **VOLUNTEERING AT THE CENTRE**

Volunteers are essential to our organization. Each member is required to fill out a volunteer recruitment form so that the Centre can match volunteers with the volunteer work they would like to do.

Volunteers sit on our board of directors and committees, help out in the office, assemble furniture, spread the word about our organization, play a huge role in our fundraisers and special events, and much more.

With your help, we will make each new year at the Centre even better than the last!

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## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN VOLUNTEERING

### *Using Our Free Childcare Service*

You may have your preschool-aged children babysat in the childcare room while you are doing volunteer work for the Centre during the day (attending meetings, working in the office, etc.). **It is important to remember that volunteers may use the childcare service only when there is space available.** Find out about childcare availability by getting in touch with the office at 514-695-8529.

When your children are in childcare, please respect the schedule you have set regarding the drop off and pick up of your child. If you have reserved childcare from 9 to 11 a.m., be sure to pick up your child promptly at 11 a.m.

### *Using the Office to Fax, Photocopy, etc.*

It is sometimes necessary for our volunteers to use the Centre's office equipment to accomplish their work. There is a computer station in the office available for contract workers and volunteers. The accountant/office administrator can show you how to use the Centre's office equipment and provide assistance as required.

Be sure to notify WIWC office staff at least the day before you intend to work in the office so that they can plan accordingly — and make sure there are no scheduling conflicts! Please also keep in mind the Centre's office hours.

### *Using Your Discretion*

During the course of your volunteer work for the Centre, you may hear information of a confidential nature. Your discretion is very much appreciated.

*Thank you, volunteers!*

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**Personnel:**

**Executive Director  
Accountant/Office Administrator  
Childcare Supervisor  
Programming and Membership Coordinator  
Community Outreach Coordinator  
Fundraising and Special Events Coordinator  
Bookkeeping Assistant  
Childcare Team**

**Mailing Address:**

P.O. Box 521, Pointe-Claire, QC, H9R 4S6

**Telephone:** 514-695-8529

**E-mail:** [wiwc@qc.aibn.com](mailto:wiwc@qc.aibn.com)

**Visit our Website: [www.wiwc.ca](http://www.wiwc.ca)**

**Follow us on Facebook:**

**<http://www.facebook.com/westislandwomenscentre>**

*The West Island Women's Centre is located in the  
annex of St. Columba-by-the-Lake Church,  
11 Rodney Avenue, Pointe-Claire, QC H9R 4L8  
(Entrance via the parking lot entrance  
on Vincennes Avenue.)*



**West Island Women's Centre  
Centre des Femmes West Island**

*We are an agency supported by Centraide of Greater Montreal.*

