

MAKING CHANGES

Advancing futures for women. **TOGETHER.**



@makingchangesyyc



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www.makingchangesassociation.ca

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Making Changes Board of Directors

Brittany Humphry, Board Chair

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Terra Davidson, Director

Cathy Coutts, Executive Director, Making Changes Association



MAKING CHANGES

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Emily Bruce

Jerilynn Daniels

Katrina Olson-Mottahed

Neil Bosch

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Samantha Koliass-Gunn

Teri-Ann Begin



DRESS FOR[®]

SUCCESS

CALGARY

Going Places. Going Strong.



MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD CHAIR

We are very proud to report that Making Changes had an outstanding fiscal 2021-2022 year. It has been a year of operational stabilization, growth, and innovation as we explored new opportunities to serve women in Calgary. We also worked together to define our organizational values – Belonging, Self-Worth, Possibility, Compassion, and Respect – and to engrain them into everything we do as an organization.

Over the past year, we have been working to define the new normal for our various programs using learnings from operating virtually through COVID-19 and determining how to deliver our programs to best meet the needs of our clients. We doubled the number of graduates from our Women in Technology program to 32 women, continued to offer our hackathon experience to enrich our students' training, increased the number of participants in our Employment and Life Skills Program, and implemented a hybrid model of virtual and in-person consultations for both our Dress for Success Calgary and My Best Friend Closet programs. A hybrid model of virtual and in-person appointments and training is important for our clients going forward as it eliminates childcare and transportation barriers for women accessing our programs.

Going forward, we see nothing but opportunity for Making Changes – our new Women in Technology Advisory Committee is poised to help ensure our graduates have relevant and job-ready technology training. As the world of work continues to evolve post-pandemic, we are looking for ways to ensure our Employment and Life Skills and Dress for Success programs provide the holistic support our women need to succeed. The foundation we have built over the last 26 years and membership as an Affiliate of Dress for Success Worldwide puts us in a great position to serve an increasing number of women and girls while enriching the experience of each of our clients. With Cathy's retirement announcement, the Board of Directors would like to thank her for her years of leadership as our Executive Director. We now look to the future and are excited to be working to find our next leader. The staff and board are actively involved in this search while ensuring program continuity during this time of transition.

Thank you to our staff, volunteers, Board of Directors, partnering agencies, donors, and funders. Your passion, commitment, and overwhelming generosity are essential to our ability to serve women and teenage girls. We are privileged to be a part of the Making Changes community and look forward to everything this next year has in store as we work towards strengthening our impact in our community by advancing the future of women, together.



Brittany Humphry
Board Chair



Cathy Coutts
Executive Director



VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

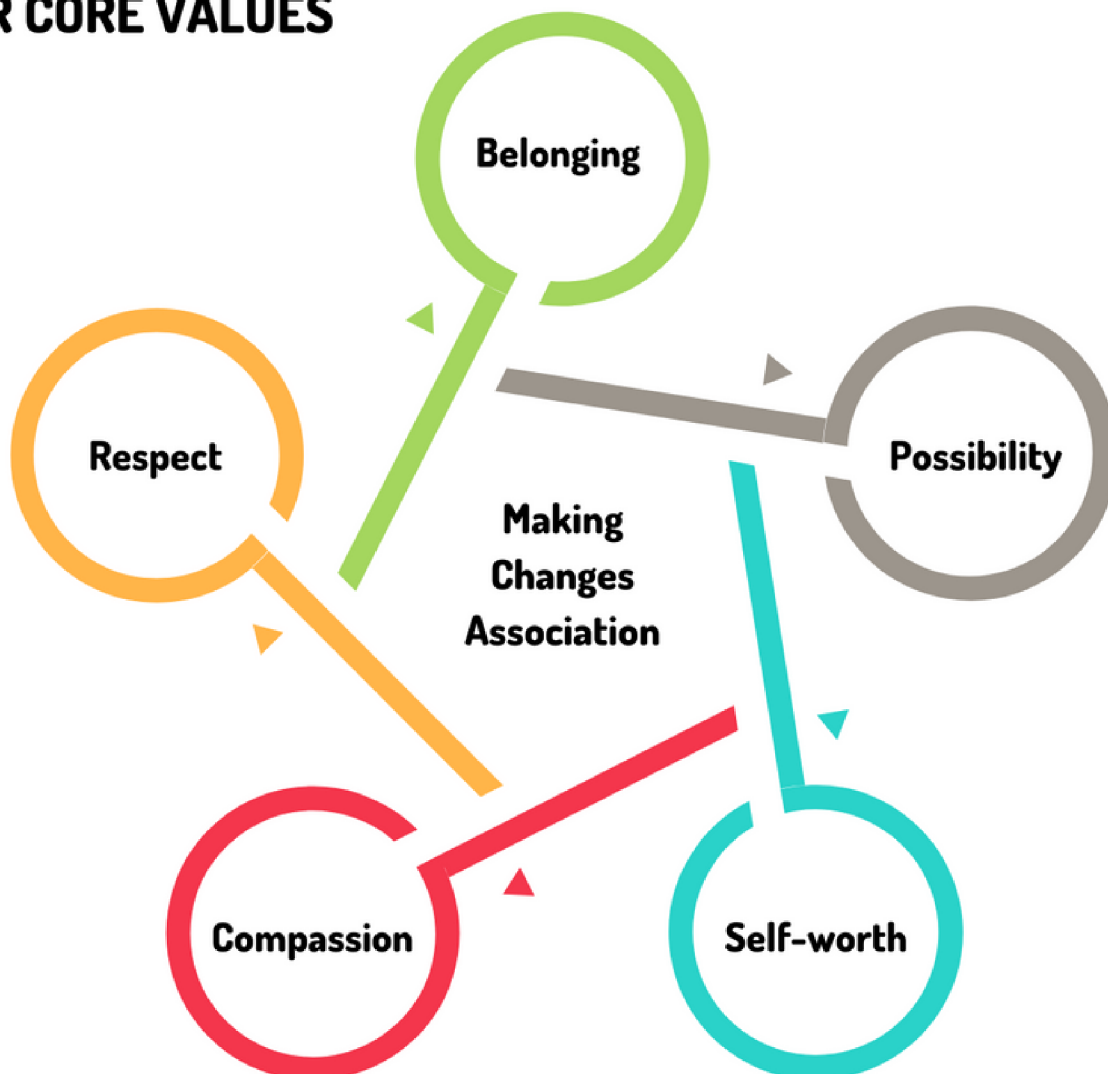
OUR VISION

Empowering women to make meaningful contributions to the community.

OUR MISSION

Making Changes is a community of women supporting women and their families through life transition by providing them with the skills and resources to support their pursuit of meaningful work and educational opportunities.

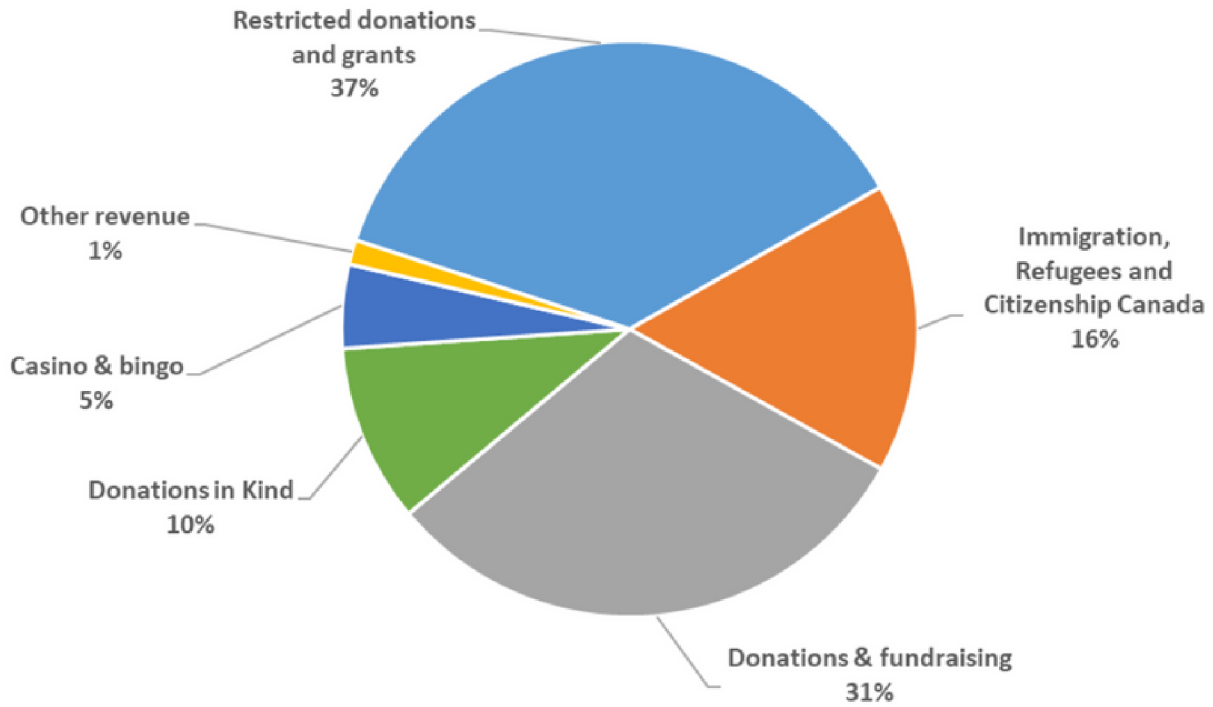
OUR CORE VALUES



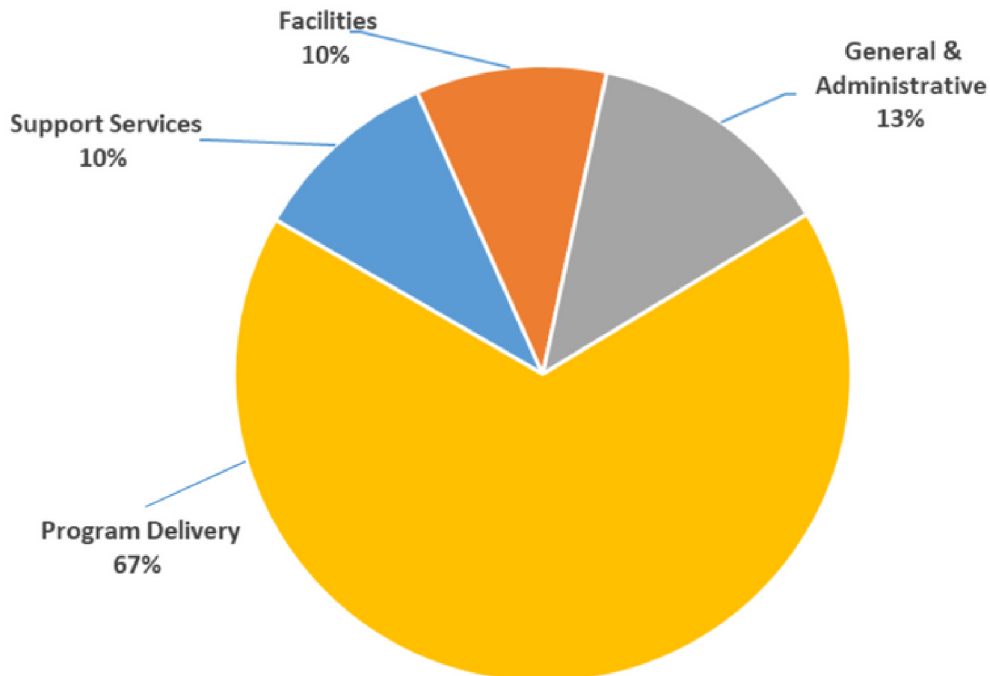


FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

REVENUE: \$1,160,716



EXPENSES: \$1,149,575



*For a more detailed look at the financial position of Making Changes, please view the full audited financial statements on our website.



OUR ANNUAL IMPACT



WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

2 Cohorts

32 Graduates

72% gained employment within 6 months of course completion



EMPLOYMENT AND LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

117 Graduates

95% Participant Satisfaction Rate

95% Participants felt more confident



DRESS FOR SUCCESS CALGARY

1,022 Appointments

27,534 Clothing & Accessory Items Provided

10 Workshops
200 women participated in online Employment Skills Workshops

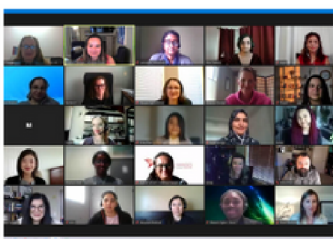
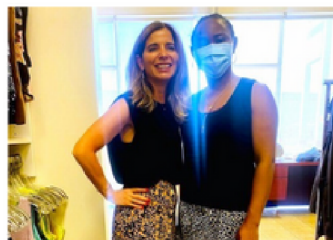
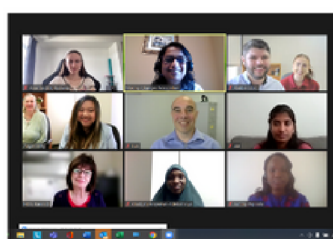


MY BEST FRIEND'S CLOSET

369 Appointments

11,346 Clothing & Accessory Items Provided

2 Workshops
Over 50 girls attended online Wellness & Employment Workshops





WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM



With the Women in Technology program, our vision is equal representation of women in STEM fields. Our mission is to empower women through technology training to launch their careers in the innovative and growing tech industry. We strive to ensure our students have the confidence, skills, and networks needed to reach their potential.

The program includes three parts: Full Stack Web Development Training, Employment and Power Skills (EPS), and Practicum Job Placement.

OUR IMPACT

A Future Full of Opportunities: *Leyla*

In 2021, I was a stay-at-home mom with two school-going kids. It had been ten years since I graduated with a computer software engineering degree. I felt lost and didn't know how or where to start building a career. Through a friend, I came to know about the Women in Technology program and applied. I was called for an interview, which didn't go well with my being out of practice for interviews, and I received a rejection email.

I will never forget April 12, 2021, the day the program was starting and I felt quite desolate. Surprisingly, I received a call from the WIT Program Manager informing me of a spot opening after a student dropped out of the program. I said "yes, absolutely" and joined the program.

I thoroughly enjoyed the sessions which were informative, hands-on learning, fun, and highly interactive. I learned to the best of my abilities from this intense but fantastic opportunity for professional development.

Two months after completing the program, I started my first ever job in Canada as a full-stack developer. A year ago, I would never have imagined that I would have a chance of working in the IT industry.

I am so thankful to everyone who supported me during the program, the Making Changes Association, and all the volunteers.

WIT PROGRAM PARTNERS

Practicum employers:

- Braintoy Inc
- Brown Bagging for Children
- Calgary Drop-in Centre
- Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan
- Exmerce
- Fidelity Factory
- FOCUS on Seniors
- FREDsense Technology
- Helen Knight Consulting
- Rallie Group
- SymmCom Inc
- Sozentech
- RollingWave
- 1010 Recruitment

Hackathon Partners:

- AltaGas
- TC Energy
- Microsoft
- Fidelity Factory

Companies volunteering for EPS workshops

- Telus
- Accenture
- SI Systems
- MCG Careers

The Stats



32
Graduates



2
Cohorts



2
Hackathons



30
Work Placement



72%
Gained Employment



EMPLOYMENT AND LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

The Employment and Life Skills Program (ELS) is our foundational program. This program is an empowerment process for immigrant women, increasing their personal power through participation so that they can take action to improve their circumstances. It offers a series of workshops to support and prepare women for their future.

The program builds confidence and skills in career planning, communication, assertiveness, Canadian business culture and accessing community resources.

"I now have self-assurance to go after my goals and feel confident about achieving success in my professional endeavors."

Souad Dhibi,
ELS Program Participant

OUR IMPACT

Finding A New Path to Success: Souad Dhibi



Souad Dhibi emigrated from Tunisia to Canada in 2014 with her family. In Tunisia, she had completed her high school diploma and had to give up further education to support her family of nine siblings, despite having a huge passion for learning. She worked in varied roles ranging from receptionist to quality control in factories. After arriving in Canada, Souad spent her initial years in Canada assisting her husband in his

business and performing a wide variety of difficult tasks. She moved to Smithers, BC in 2019 for her 3-year-old son's schooling needs. This allowed her time to pursue education and search for a better job.

She needed to learn computer skills and improve her English speaking skills to find the job of her choice. She started an online business selling Jade stones, at the same time joining English classes to improve her language skills. Her long-term goal was to find a job in the government sector and help others. Besides working, she got involved in fundraising by joining committees working to find solutions for social issues back in her home country and in her community in Canada. When she heard about the Employment and Life Skills program from the Community Services, Smithers, she felt it was the right choice for her to empower herself. She enrolled in the program in January 2022.

She found the ELS program valuable and highly informative, particularly improving in networking skills, English communication, effectively using LinkedIn, and tailoring her resume, and interview skills. In addition to the tangible skills, Souad has learned to be self-confident and assertive. Where earlier she had left a job unable to stand up to bullying at the workplace, she now feels empowered and confident about handling difficult situations and standing up for herself. She has faith in her abilities to take the first step in her social contribution journey.

Souad says "I now have the self-assurance to go after my goals and feel confident about achieving success in my professional endeavors."

The Stats



117
Graduates



95%
Participant Satisfaction
Rate



95%
Participants felt more
confident



DRESS FOR SUCCESS CALGARY

The Stats



1,022
Appointments



27,534
Clothing & Accessory Items
Provided



10 Workshops
200 women participated in online
Employment Skills Workshops

Dress For Success Calgary operates as a division of the Making Changes Association. The program provides 90-minute individual consultations on business attire to women facing financial barriers who want to join the workforce, return to school, or engage in volunteer opportunities.



**DRESS FOR
SUCCESS**
CALGARY

Going Places. Going Strong.

In addition to information on business culture and appropriate dress, participants are offered gently-used clothing and accessories at no cost to help them look and feel their best.

OUR IMPACT

Taking Charge of Her Destiny: Alycia

Alycia was born and raised in Calgary. Unfortunately, she was raised in an abusive household and was sexually abused by her father from the very young age of 4. Alycia left her parents' home when she was only 14. Over the next few years, she moved through several abusive relationships with dangerous boyfriends and dangerous situations. She stayed in these relationships because she felt that she had nowhere else to go and because she felt shame and guilt at the idea of reaching out for help.

This cycle repeated itself until about 5 years ago when Alycia went to a partner agency for help. They advised her to leave everything behind and her abuser. They also referred Alycia to Making Changes/ Dress For Success Calgary. She says that initially, she didn't feel worthy of the help that was offered, but once she began the process and started to accept the support, the benefits snowballed and had an amazingly positive impact on her life and future.

Dress For Success helped Alycia with clothing. She was then introduced to the Employment and Life Skills Program, which provided various resources such as resume writing classes, interview preparation, job search and networking tips, school supplies, and access to other resources, such as financial mentoring.

Alycia is very grateful for the business clothing Dress For Success Calgary provided, as this gave her the ability to present herself well in her job search. Participation in the Employment and Life Skills Program allowed her to confidently approach the workplace and find a job she loves as a Customer Service Representative with a Utility Company. Alycia says "With the support, I have received, I have worked very hard to get to a point where I feel safe, happy, independent, and confident about my future".

Alycia is actively continuing her personal growth, working with a therapist, taking financial literacy courses, and learning Spanish. Her goals for the future include being debt-free, owning her own home, and knowing that she has the confidence and the resources to walk away from any situation that is not healthy for her.

CORPORATE DONORS

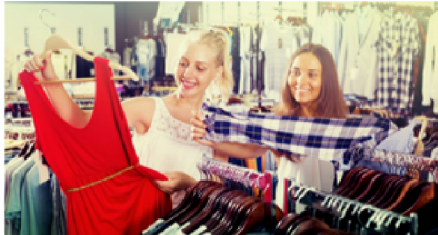
- Blu's Karma Project
- Chatters
- Crabapple Clothing
- Danielle's Consignment
- Ginger Laurier
- Sublime YYC
- Something2Wear
- Stella and Dot
- Vespucci
- Revente



MY BEST FRIEND'S CLOSET

My Best Friend's Closet program empowers teen girls to fully participate in school and social activities. We focus on supporting youth to feel confident to take charge of their education and careers.

The Stats



369
Appointments
(virtual: 91 / in-person: 278)



2 Workshops
Over 50 girls attended online Wellness & Employment Workshops



11,346
Clothing & Accessory Items Provided

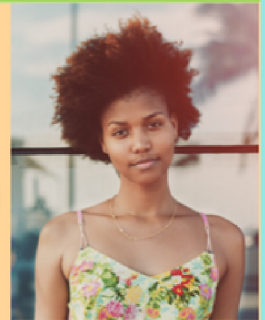
OUR IMPACT

*A New Beginning, A Brighter Future: **Mary Chimes****

*Name has been changed to protect the identity of our client

Mary moved with her family from Nigeria four years ago. She was nervous but also excited for a new chance at life. She fell in love with Calgary's weather and the relaxed pace of life. Her next step was to navigate junior high school as a grade seven student. Being new to Canada, choosing appropriate clothing and figuring out clothing culture seemed like a daunting task.

Since their arrival, Mary's family had been struggling to make ends meet. As a result, Mary and her siblings were not able to afford school clothing of their choice. She spent the next two years with her self-confidence drained and did not feel as though she could be herself. In grade nine, Mary's mom turned to Big Brothers and Big Sisters to help their family.



Big Brother and Big Sisters referred Mary to My Best Friends Closet. At first, Mary didn't know what to expect but as soon as she arrived, she felt instantly comfortable and radiated positive energy throughout the appointment. We provided clothing Mary needed to return to school with self-confidence. She said, "I loved working the volunteer stylist who helped me with many helpful tips, figure out my own style and pick out the perfect outfits for me that made me feel confident. Coming to My Best Friends Closet brought more joy into my life and I feel empowered to continue reaching for my goals!"

Mary strives to be a doctor in the future to contribute to the society. She is very thankful for the opportunity to come to My Best Friends Closet and hopes to volunteer as a stylist to help instill confidence in other teens!

AGENCIES THAT REFERRED CLIENTS TO MBFC

- Alberta Health Service
- Bow West Community
- BGCC
- Big Brothers and Sisters
- Immigrant Services Calgary
- Boys & Girls Club of Calgary
- Children's Cottage
- Calgary Bridge Foundation
- Calgary Immigrant Women's Association
- Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter
- Calgary Board of Education
- Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
- Calgary Foothills Primary Care Network
- Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth
- CWES
- CARYA
- Center for Newcomers
- Dress for Success
- Grow with Trellis
- Government of Alberta
- Northeast Family Connections
- Inn from the Cold
- Immigrant Education Society
- MCG Careers
- Mosaic
- Jewish Family Service Calgary
- Positive Choices Education
- The Mustard Seed
- Women's Center
- YWCA



VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are essential to our work and support in meeting our objectives. Each volunteer brings a different range of knowledge, skills, and experience to support the needs of the clients and programs. By volunteering, they put into action their passion for giving back to the community. Our core values of respect, compassion, self-worth, belonging and possibility are reflected in our volunteers.

The Stats



247

Volunteers



10,049

Hours

We thank all our volunteers! We feel fortunate to have you as our allies, supporters, and ambassadors. Thank you for your ongoing belief in Making Changes and your commitment to advancing futures for women and teen girls in Calgary!

OUR IMPACT

'Rediscovering My Passion':

Raj Dosanjh

I began volunteering at My Best Friend's Closet in early 2022 to find new opportunities and rebuild after COVID. I instantly knew MBFC was the right place for me. With an innate interest in fashion and clothes, I believe clothes define how a person carries themselves. As a young girl, I struggled to feel represented and comfortable in my clothing. It took me years to have a connection with what I wore through a difficult and transformative journey. I loved the idea of helping other young girls go through it.



Every single shift I'm reminded of the importance of my work and why I signed up. You can see faces light up when you bring out a piece they adore, and how it changes their mood. Clients feel comfortable and excited when they're able to put together a wardrobe that truly represents them. It also gives them the avenue to explore their style and build their sense of self.

Each girl is so unique from the pieces they pick out, their personalities, and their stories; it's hard to forget any of them. The client I think about the most was a mother-daughter duo. Throughout the appointment, the mom wasn't too sure about sizes or her daughter's personal taste. At the very end, she told us that she had been in Canada on a work visa for a few years and was separated from her daughter until recently. It was hard for us to keep our emotions at bay. It was a beautiful reminder that the impact and change made at My Best Friend's Closet is life-altering.

MBFC has had a huge impact on me and my own identity. I felt at a huge loss during the pandemic. Volunteering was the first step for me to reclaim something for myself. I had shown a client a skirt and she instantly had the biggest smile on her face. I felt fulfillment and a strong sense of purpose after a long time. It gave me the confidence to pursue numerous other opportunities in other parts of my life. To help build up young girls and open doors for them is an effort I'm grateful to align myself with. I'm very proud to say I'll be continuing this work!

Opportunities

Join our Volunteer Team and make a difference!

We are looking for: **Stylists, Sorters, Special Events, Mentors, and Resume & Interview Support.**

www.makingchangesassociation.ca/volunteer-application-form



PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Funded by / Financé par:



 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada



HOLT RENFREW



Community Partners

Thank you to the many incredible local businesses, corporations, organizations and individuals who have supported and contributed to our programs this year!

We are truly grateful for your relationship and generosity.





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