

Mayor Frank Campion's statement for International Women's Day 2022

International Women's Day (March 8) is a global day celebrating women's social, economic, cultural, and political achievements. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity.

It is an honour to spend time today reflecting on the many contributions of women worldwide. To healthcare. To science. To justice. To art. To teaching. To finance. To politics. To everything.

The City of Welland is fortunate to have great leaders, many of whom are women. To put this in perspective, women lead our engineering team, which is a rarity in many municipalities. Our managers in human resources, planning, and assets are women. Our clerk, deputy clerk, and deputy treasurer - all women. And let's be clear, these women are in leadership positions because they are capable, skilled, intelligent, and inspiring. They are not women leaders. They are leaders. We rely on their minds and expertise for the best advice and guidance to make crucial decisions.

Around our horseshoe, we have women injecting their voices, passions, and beliefs into causes and projects that make this community great. I hope they inspire more women to think of doing the same in future elections, whether at the municipal level or otherwise.

We must be cognizant that the gap in gender equality is closed. It's not. It may have narrowed, but that's not good enough. According to the Global Gender Gap Index, Canada ranks 24th overall, including 40th in economic participation and opportunity, 1st in educational attainment, 29th in political empowerment, and 100th in health and survival. Overall, we have much to be proud of as a country, but there will always be room to improve.

To suggest that this is a women's issue flies in the face of what we're trying to achieve. This is a human issue. The rise of women does not necessitate the fall of anyone else. It is not a direct cause-and-effect structure.

The City of Welland recently launched a new podcast to update the community about what's happening and what's new. This week's guest is Jennifer Gauthier, executive director from Women's Place of South Niagara. I strongly encourage you to listen to this episode – available on March 10 – to understand the disadvantages women can face socially, in the workplace, and at home.

If you choose to listen to this episode, consider the stories told in words unsaid. If you pay attention closely, you'll hear them. I know I did.

While we celebrate today and acknowledge the global significance of women worldwide, we must remember that actions speak louder than words. This is no less true with our work towards creating a world with gender parity and equality for all in opportunities, pay, and advancement.

Last year, the City of Welland was a proud sponsor of the YWCA's Leadership Summit for Women. In past years and continuing this year, the City has supported our female leaders through Leadership Niagara and NextGen. As we move ahead, I hope we continue these paths, forge new ones, and increase all opportunities.

Thank you to the 126 female employees of the City of Welland. Thank you for your leadership, inspiration, and contributions to our municipality. And thank you to all the women in Welland, as professionals, workers, students, volunteers, caregivers, partners, friends, and everything in between. Without you, we are but a fraction of the rich community we are today.

 - Mayor Frank Campion

