

International Day of  
the Girl Child 2022:



**ALEXA  
McDONOUGH  
INSTITUTE**  
for women, gender  
& social justice

## 'She-roes: The Power to Change the World'

Friday, October 14, 2022

9:00am - 1:00pm | Live via MS Teams



Join us for the Virtual Conference



@ami\_msvu

www.msvu.ca

**[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)**

# PROGRAM CONTENTS

WELCOME FROM THE ALEXA MCDONOUGH INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN, GENDER & SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR THE 2022 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD .....	3
TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL AND ENGAGING VIRTUAL CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE .....	4
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD CELEBRATION – PROGRAM .....	5
KEYNOTE SPEAKER – KAREN OLDFIELD.....	6
WORKSHOPS AND PRESENTERS.....	7
SPECIAL GUEST – DAMINI AWOYIGA – SPOKEN WORD & POETRY .....	11
SPOTLIGHT: TIKTOK CONVERSATION – Q&A SESSION.....	12
ABOUT THE ALEXA MCDONOUGH INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN, GENDER & SOCIAL JUSTICE.....	13
ELEGY FOR ALEXA ANN (SHAW) MCDONOUGH (1944-2022).....	14

**WELCOME FROM THE ALEXA MCDONOUGH INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN,  
GENDER & SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR THE 2022 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE  
GIRL CHILD**



We are so excited you are joining us to celebrate International Day of the Girl Child. Our theme *Sheroes: The Power to Change the world* speaks to the power of women and girls to make our communities and world a better place to learn, work and live.

We hope today's program will help you build confidence, learn something new, appreciate what makes you special, start a movement, find a cause, express yourself, follow your dreams and get inspired by the words, wisdom and song of other women and girls.

When girls and women unite, we can do amazing things together like break biases, overcome barriers, solve problems, protect our environment, achieve equality, and build inclusive, diverse, strong communities where everyone's contributions are valued.

A special thank you to all those teachers, principals, and community leaders out there who helped gather girls and young women together to make this virtual conference possible. And to the AMI Steering Committee (a special shoutout to our new MSVU President Dr. Joël Dickinson), AMI staff (Al Rafuse, Stephanie Isiguzoro, Mankiran Kaur), AMI Fellow (Elayna Foran), volunteers, Mount Saint Vincent University leadership and staff, our Digital Media Zone/Audio-Visual Department (Greg Pretty, Patrick Leonard, Brett Kibbler, Joel Rowsell), Mount Print Shop (Anna Kim), and Conference Services (Jill Hurlbert, Patricia Drake), we appreciate all that you do to make special projects like this come to life.

To our wonderful keynote, speakers, and workshop facilitators thank you for bringing your talent and leadership to empower girls and young women from across Nova Scotia and beyond.

And to the family of Alexa McDonough, thank you for allowing us to carry on in Alexa's name, an inspiring woman who did make the world we live in a better place.

**Let's come together to become leaders with *The Power to Change the World!***

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tegan Zimmerman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Dr. Tegan Zimmerman  
Chair, Alexa McDonough Institute for Women, Gender & Social Justice**

## **TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL AND ENGAGING VIRTUAL CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE**

1. We have an opening address for all first thing in the morning starting at 9:15a.m. We also have several workshop offerings throughout the day which include many broad topic areas. We will provide MS Teams links to each session in the following schedule of events.
2. We encourage girls to sign on individually from their own devices with earphones/earbuds but understand, it's a school day! You can also gather in classrooms or computer labs at school around one large screen with the help of your teachers and principals. Connect the screen to a computer with an internet connection where this program can be downloaded from the email where it was received. Each session has its own link.
3. The International Day of the Girl Child celebration will be streamed through Microsoft Teams. You can join from your web browser (Google Chrome is used by many NS schools) or you can download the MS Teams App on your computer, laptop, Chromebook, iPad, etc. Please consult with your local IT support team if you require assistance.
4. Karen Oldfield will share her story in the **Keynote Address**. Karen will speak for a short time and then, we will open up so you can use your mics and the chat box for a **'Question and Answer' session**. We encourage you to think about questions to ask Karen!
5. At times throughout the day, you have the choice to join different workshops. We have provided links to each of them (**see Conference Program**).
6. When you join a workshop, your cameras and microphones are disabled for a good part of the session when workshop presenters are speaking on camera to ensure the internet connection remains strong. After a while, we will turn on microphones and cameras so you can interact with the presenters and ask questions. We will still have the chat box open to encourage engagement, answer questions and offer comments but we ask that you please be polite and respectful.
7. We encourage you to have a paper, notebook, pens, pencils nearby during the sessions so you can participate in the activities during the sessions. Get creative!

**Thanks to MSVU and the AMI, registration to this virtual conference is free of charge!**

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD CELEBRATION – PROGRAM

**\*\*Tentative workshop title**

8:55 – 9:00am	<b>Online Sign-in through MS Teams Links</b>		
9:00 – 9:10am	<b>Welcome &amp; Opening Address</b> <i>MSVU President &amp; Vice Chancellor, Dr. Joel Dickinson</i> <i>AMI Chair, Dr. Tegan Zimmerman</i>		
9:10 – 9:15am	<b>Special Guest, Damini Awoyiga – Spoken Word &amp; Poetry</b>		
9:15 – 9:45am	<b>Keynote Address, Karen Oldfield</b> <i>Interim President &amp; CEO Nova Scotia Health</i>		
9:45 – 10:00am	<b>Break</b>		
<b>CONCURRENT WORKSHOP SESSION 1</b>			
10:00 – 10:45am	<b>**Be an Entrepreneur!</b> <i>Shivani Dhamija</i>	<b>Introducing... YOU! Meet Your Selfie and Discover Your BEST Self</b> <i>Lisa MacDonald</i>	<b>Women and Gaming</b> <i>Janet Reinschmidt</i>
10:45 – 11:00am	<b>Break</b>		
<b>CONCURRENT WORKSHOP SESSION 2</b>			
11:00 – 11:45am	<b>How to Ignite Your Power to Change the World</b> <i>Andrea Speranza</i>	<b>**Yoga!</b> <i>Melissa Millar, Coordinator, Fitness &amp; Wellness MSVU</i>	<b>**Holistic Approaches to Building Mental Well-being</b> <i>Shanna Peltier</i>
11:45am – 12:00pm	<b>Break</b>		
12:00 – 12:30pm	<b>Spotlight: TikTok Conversation – Q&amp;A Session</b> <i>Q&amp;A with Juliana Murphy &amp; Stephanie Isiguzoro</i>		
12:30 – 12:40pm	<b>Conference Wrap Up &amp; Closing Remarks</b> <i>Dr. Tegan Zimmerman &amp; Stephanie Isiguzoro</i>		

## **KEYNOTE SPEAKER – KAREN OLDFIELD K. C., ICD.D – INTERIM PRESIDENT & CEO NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH**



Karen Oldfield served for more than 18 years as President and CEO of the Halifax Port Authority where the organization saw record level growth in investments and expansion translating to a significant increase in trade activity for the region. Under her leadership, Halifax became the first port in Canada to achieve the internationally recognized standard for environmental management systems earning the ISO14001 certification.

As the Interim President and CEO of Nova Scotia Health (NSH) by appointment of Premier Tim Houston, Karen has been tasked with leading the organization’s effort to take immediate action to improve health care in Nova Scotia. While seconded to Nova Scotia Health, Karen has also been appointed Deputy Minister of Priorities and Planning for the Government of Nova Scotia, a role fundamental to the strategic priorities of the province.

During her tenure at the Port Authority, revenues more than tripled, enabling the organization to make significant financial investments in strategic port and transportation infrastructure to improve port competitiveness and the livability of the City of Halifax. Oldfield has global experience, particularly in trade development and the establishment of new markets together with deep expertise in supply chain management and logistics. Karen operates and achieves results in complex, multiparty/stakeholder environments, particularly at the nexus of levels of government interacting with the private sector.

Organizational future-proofing and recruiting and developing talent are Karen’s passions. Her inquisitive nature and ability to anticipate issues and remove the barriers that challenge high-functioning systems, has aided Karen in spotting themes and trends to propel organizations to the forefront of change.

Ms. Oldfield is Past Chair of the Board of Governors of Saint Mary’s University. In recognition of her dedication and passion for excellence in business, in May 2022 she received an honorary Doctor of Commerce from Saint Mary’s University. She has served as President of the Canadian Chapter of the International Women’s Forum, a global organization comprised of female leaders with a stated mission to further develop female executive and board talent. Ms. Oldfield serves as Lead Director of Acadian Timber (ADN.TO), serving as Chair of Nomination and Governance and Executive Compensation as well as member of the Audit Committee.

Karen has a supportive family, husband Darren and daughter Laura whom allow her to go and “get things done”.

## WORKSHOPS AND PRESENTERS



*Andréa Speranza*

### **How to Ignite Your Power to Change the World**

You don't need money, power, or connections to change the world; you need passion, courage, tenacity, and resilience. It's not who you are nor where you came from but how well defined your dream is, who you are willing to become on your journey, how hard you are willing to work to achieve your goals, and who you will bring along for the ride.

### **About Andréa Speranza**

As a university graduate, business owner and volunteer firefighter, Andréa Speranza became a career firefighter 23 years ago. She was promoted to Lieutenant and then Captain with the Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency Service. Her passion for improving everything she has experienced led her to found Camp Courage, an award-winning, life-changing camp that educates and inspires young women to become first responders. She is the recipient of many awards.





## **Women and Gaming**

Women and girls have always loved video games but there is also a certain amount of harassment that we often expect to face when logging in. This is a discussion about women and girls in gaming, the games we like, the recent history of sexism in the industry, what it's like being an esports athlete, and how we create our own space in the industry and change games for the better.

### **About Janet Reinschmidt:**

Janet Reinschmidt is a media fan with an MA in Media Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. She recently studied film and media preservation at the Eastman Museum in Rochester, NY and now works full time in film preservation. She has always loved playing and studying video games and was briefly on the first ever all women collegiate esports team at Stephens College playing Overwatch.



## **Holistic Approaches to Building Mental Well-being**

I will be speaking on holistic approaches to wellness as well as self-compassion work as important for building mental wellbeing. I will lead them through some self-compassion exercises and provide an engaging workshop which theorizes their approach to holistic wellbeing.

### **About Shanna Peltier:**

Shanna Peltier is a proud Anishinaabe kwe from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory located on Mnidoo Mnis, Manitoulin Island – Ontario. She is a third-year Ph.D. student in School and Clinical Child Psychology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) – University of Toronto (UofT). She holds a Masters in School and Clinical Child



Psychology from OISE-UofT and completed all requirements for the collaborative specialization in Indigenous health. In 2021, she was awarded the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Vanier Scholarship for her community-based research in Indigenous mental health, suicide prevention, and life promotion. Shanna is currently completing her second psychological intervention practicum placement at the Cognitive and Interpersonal Therapy Centre.



### **Be an Entrepreneur!**

I'm coming from India, a country that has a masculinity culture, and I as a woman have lots of roles as a daughter, sister, wife, and mother. I would like to talk about how I handled all these roles besides being an entrepreneur. How this way can be hard and at the same time amazing!

### **About Shivani Dhamija:**

I moved to Nova Scotia in 2011 with a diploma in public relations from Fanshawe College and tried working at various media and PR companies but had no luck. It was while working at the Canada Games Center in Halifax, NS, where a friend of mine told me that a trucker friend of hers was missing home-cooked Indian food and wanted someone to make food for him to take on his trips. He was my first client. I created a Facebook page publicizing my meal delivery services and got a tremendous response. I created cooking classes as the second offering in my business in 2015. Another opportunity presented itself after listening to the feedback from the cooking classes. People absolutely loved the classes but found it difficult to find the spices to prepare the meals at home. Understanding the needs of my customers, we launched spice blends in 2016 and ready-to-use sauces in 2018. Now, my products can be found in The Real Canadian Superstore, Sobeys, online at Walmart, and on our website



## **Yoga!**

This class blends many styles of yoga with the main goal being fitness and overall wellbeing. Incorporating elements of strength, endurance, flexibility, breathwork and mindfulness training this class will give you a taste of how yoga can help all people in different ways. With options provided for all levels come and experience a workout that doesn't just improve the body but also the state of your mind!

### **About Melissa Millar:**

Melissa has been working in the fitness industry for 25 years and presenting at conferences for over 15. She holds degrees in Fine Arts and Kinesiology, and certifications as a **Personal Trainer, Group Fitness Instructor, Yoga Instructor, and Trainer Educator**. In 2009 she was awarded the **Fitness Instructor of the Year-Freestyle** in Auckland. Melissa then ran her own mobile fitness company, **MOTIVA Wellbeing and Fitness** for 7 years before coming to work at MSVU as Coordinator, Fitness & Wellness.



## ***Introducing... YOU! Meet Your Selfie and Discover Your BEST Self!***

Are you ready to meet your selfie and discover your BEST self? Your selfie is everything that makes you, YOU! This interactive virtual workshop will introduce you to ways of discovering the qualities that make you lovable and important. You will discover you at your best and learn ways to see and compliment yourself in various ways! The workshop ends with a guided visualization that allows you to understand how you can remain your BEST self while doing different things in the world!

### **About Lisa MacDonald:**

Lisa MacDonald created and facilitated her first esteem/empowerment group for girls called *It's a Girl Thing* in 2007. Since then, she has devoted over 8 years to *It's a Girl Thing* groups. She recently released her first book for youth; *Me, My Selfie, and I: Discovering and Embracing a True Love of Self*. This interactive book shares the key lessons that she has refined through working with girls for close to twenty years. Lisa continues to work in Halifax as an administrator in education.

Twitter: @AuthorLisaMac

Email: authorlisamacdonald@gmail.com

Website: www.authorlisamacdonald.ca

## SPECIAL GUEST – DAMINI AWOYIGA – SPOKEN WORD & POETRY



**Damini Awoyiga** is a 15-year-old grade high student at Charles. P. Allen High School. She is a spoken word poet, writer, activist, fashion designer, singer and art illustrator. Damini is the founder of the Afro-Indigenous Book Club, a book club she created to encourage young people to read books written by Black and Indigenous authors and to share the realities and experiences of Black and Indigenous Canadians. Damini was the Junior artist in residence for Wellness Within, a community organization working for reproductive justice, prison abolition and health equity. She was also a Youth Ambassador for Digitally Lit, a youth-led strategy that aims to empower young Atlantic Canadians. She has used Digitally Lit's social media to create a campaign for accessibility awareness in built spaces.

Damini is the youth entrepreneur behind Damini Creatives. A mask and fashion enterprise that she launched in the middle of the 2020 pandemic. She made headlines in 2020 with her bright, colourful and vibrant African fabric masks.

She was CBC's artist in residence for the Michaele Jean Foundation's Canadian Black Summit held in July 2022, where she hosted an interactive community poetry booth.

As a spoken word poet for the past four years, Damini loves to write and perform spoken word poems to bring attention to social justice issues that she cares deeply about.

**Website:** <https://www.daminicreatives.com/>

**Instagram:** @Damini.Awoyiga

**Twitter:** @awoyiga



## SPOTLIGHT: TIKTOK CONVERSATION – Q&A SESSION

This is a live Q&A conversation session based on questions that Juliana received when she presented at a past Girls Conference. Very little is off limits, so feel free to join and we can talk about anything content creator, influencer, and social media-related!



With over 70,000 followers, Juliana is a local social media content creator and influencer. While pursuing a degree at Dalhousie University, she found time to build a business for herself in the content creation and influencing spheres. According to Juliana, when it comes to starting to build your platforms, the sooner the better; and she wishes she started back in high school when she was first interested in it. She never thought that her posts would turn into anything more than a hobby, but her hard work has paid off.!



Chiamaka Stephanie Isiguzoro is in the second year of her master's degree in Public relations at Mount Saint Vincent University. She has an undergraduate degree in Communication with a concentration in media studies and production. Stephanie is interested in building relationships and this has led her to take on multiple roles. These include volunteering with victims of Boko Haram insurgents back home in Nigeria and currently as events coordinator for the Alexa McDonough Institute for Women, Gender and Social Justice. She also took advantage of her knowledge of media while working with Brighter Girls, a home for abused girls by acting as a communications director, overseeing press conferences and hosting outreach events with the local government.

In Stephanie's free time, she likes to watch movies and do movie reviews on her blog.

## **ABOUT THE ALEXA MCDONOUGH INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN, GENDER & SOCIAL JUSTICE**

### **Advancing women, gender, and social justice:**

The Mount Saint Vincent University Institute for the Study of Women (ISW) was revitalized in 2011 and renamed the Institute for Women, Gender, and Social Justice (IWGSJ) to reflect contemporary realities of the University's ongoing commitment to gender equality and Women's Studies. In February 2013, the Institute was renamed to honor Alexa McDonough and became the Alexa McDonough Institute for Women, Gender, and Social Justice (AMI).

Dr. Alexa McDonough, OC, ONS was a stand-out leader, feminist and cherished member of the Mount Saint Vincent University family. To summarize her legacy in one paragraph is impossible; what follows only begins to describe some of Alexa's many accomplishments. Though many of us came to know her through her political work, she was a social worker, reporter, and teacher. She fought for worker health and safety improvements, human rights protections and pay equity, and has been a champion of international development and peace advocacy. Ramona Lumpkin, CM, PhD, Interim President and Vice-Chancellor, [reflected on Alexa's legacy and accomplishments](#), which is available on our website. The institute's mission reflects what Alexa spent her career fighting for: equity and improved lives across communities through feminist initiatives, activism and a dedication to social justice.

### **Our mission:**

The AMI aims to achieve equity and improve lives through feminist initiatives that extend knowledge and understanding of issues related to women, girls, gender, and social justice for the Mount community and beyond.

Alexa McDonough Institute for Women, Gender and Social Justice  
Mount Saint Vincent University | 166 Bedford Highway | Halifax, NS | B3M 2J6  
[ami@msvu.ca](mailto:ami@msvu.ca)



## ELEGY FOR ALEXA ANN (SHAW) MCDONOUGH

(1944-2022)

I

A Kindergarten is what a proper  
Legislature is, where the Treasury  
Is Sharing. How else do humans prosper  
If not by Charity beyond measure?  
To parcel out fairly peanut butter  
Cookies, sluiced down by lemonade, and  
teach  
That Policy is Rhyme—never stuttered—  
And Law is verses versus what pirates  
preach,  
So the bee may hop-scotch, dipsy-doodle,  
And songbird serenade (like Portia  
White),  
And poutine mash well with apple  
strudel,  
And finger paints mirror stained-glass  
delights....

II

So did you model such Wisdom, Beauty,  
O Miss Shaw, sprightly and winsome,  
laughing  
In your lessons, the chalked-letter duties  
Lightning cross blackboards, sea chanteys  
puffing  
From a record player, or flared spirituals  
Hymning out of sing-song mouths and  
cherry

Or ebon cheeks? Pure, Mother Goose  
minstrels—  
Our alphabets sloppy, dictionaries  
With crayon-crazed pages half-torn-out—  
We well-versed citizens are, who do trust  
That Magic is possible when we vote,  
And abracadabra rhymes with must.  
O my teacher, an essential element  
Of the Superb, so you were—in plaid  
skirt,  
Working daily such endless  
astonishments:  
Crafts to soothe bruised egos, kiss-salves  
for hurts;  
So intrinsically sensitive, or stern—  
To cure misdeeds with sharp look or a  
hug,  
As you could, so we civil rites would learn  
And our human rights never would we  
shrug.  
III  
You always said I was a rascal boy  
In that pre-school legislature of yarns,  
Tall tales, short naps, where ideas were  
toys—  
Pixie-dust dreams, such Nonsense that  
discerns  
Better ways of thinking, being, doing,



While Charity ushers Euphoria.  
(What's a rainbow save all colours hewing  
To-and-from gilt phantasmagoria?)  
O my teacher, the first politico  
To breathe my Poetry into Hansard,  
News of your passing stirs my vertigo—  
Til tear-cracked eyes and tear-wracked  
voice (censored No more), now weep for  
you—liberator  
Of gulag-tortured man or downpressed  
mom—  
Opponent of each troop-backed dictator;  
Sister to each feminist from-the-womb!  
IV  
O my teacher, to the assembly born—  
The whole people's parliamentarian—  
You took my mom and me boating one  
morn  
On waters smooth, egalitarian.

After, as the sun washed its beams in  
froth—  
And you and my mom talked of  
schoolbook things—  
I spooned clam-chowder's buttered broth,  
And chewed cookies, slurped juice, and  
soared on swings.  
That was one day distinct from thousands  
since—  
One moment of momentous radiance!  
The lesson taught? O Joy is Insolence  
Upsetting all vile, petty governments.  
The House of Commons' most uncommon  
Sense—  
Intransigent, insurgent Eloquence—  
O my teacher (Grammar all future-  
tense)—  
You taught—I witnessed—deathless  
Magnificence.  
-George Elliott Clarke, OC, O