

MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Two Fantastic Events Celebrating Women Coming Later this Month

- **Fireside Chat Speakers Announced for Women of the Year**
- **Full Agenda for Second Annual Waterloo Region Women's Expo**

May 5, 2025 – KITCHENER, ON – [Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest](#) (KWO) is pleased to announce that two of last year's [Women of the Year](#) 50th anniversary award recipients – [United Way](#)'s CEO Joan Fisk (Lifetime Achievement) and the Dessert Artist (Rising Star), Rochelle Williams – will be hosting a fireside chat at this year's [BMO Financial Group Women of the Year](#) Celebration. The topic of the conversation will be: *Then & Now: Career Wisdom Across Generations*.

"[Gowling WLG](#) is extremely proud to return as the speaker sponsor for the Women of the Year event with Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest," shares Rosa Lupo, Partner, Gowling WLG. "As we celebrate our own 40th anniversary, it is especially meaningful to support the distinguished women leaders in our community and to be part of recognizing 51 years of female empowerment and innovation in the region."

Contenders have been nominated in 12 categories including: Arts & Culture sponsored by [Onward Media](#), Community Service sponsored by [REIS Informatica](#), Educator Award, Entrepreneur 40+ sponsored by Miranda O'Sullivan of [Chestnut Park West](#), Group Achievement Award, Health & Wellness sponsored by the [Greater K-W Chamber of Commerce Physician Recruitment](#), Lifetime Achievement sponsored by [Schlegel Villages](#), Professional 40+ sponsored by [Home Hardware](#), Skilled Trades sponsored by [Grand Valley Construction Association](#), Science, Technology, Engineering & Math sponsored by [Perimeter Institute](#), Vanguard Under 40 sponsored by [Pillers](#) and the Young Adult sponsored by the [YWCA K-W](#).

New this year, the celebration will feature "Wrapped in Wonder" – a gift card wall where guests can purchase a \$25 entry and receive a surprise card valued anywhere from \$25 to \$150. The initiative is a fundraiser for [Oktoberfest Cares](#), in partnership with [Conestoga Mall](#).

Tickets for the 51st annual BMO Financial Group Women of the Year on Thursday, May 21st at Bingemans are selling fast. Corporate tables and general admission tickets can be purchased [HERE](#).

Waterloo Region Women's Expo

On May 23rd, the second annual [Waterloo Region Women's Expo](#) returns with even more programming than last year – and tickets are just \$5.

Located at Bingemans, doors open at 11:00 a.m. and the event runs until 5:00 p.m. Keynote speaker [Kim Basler](#), a renowned women's self-trust and empowerment coach and breathwork facilitator, is set to take the stage at 1:15 pm. In her talk, Come As You Are: The Power of Self-Acceptance & Authenticity, Kim will inspire attendees to embrace their true selves and cultivate confidence and self-trust.

Later in the afternoon (3:30 p.m.), don't miss "Lessons on Loot" – a moderated panel with financial experts Mary Jo Fedy, Chief Financial Officer at [KPMG](#); Jody Cleminson, Managing Partner at [Loft Wealth Management](#); and lawyer [Sarah Mumtaz](#). They'll unpack key financial life topics in a clear, easy-to-understand way.

"With interactive workshops and a lively showcase of 88 local businesses and vendors running all day, the Women's Expo celebrates the incredible impact women have made in Waterloo Region – while creating space for connection, growth and collaboration," shares Tracy Van Kalsbeek, Executive Director of K-W Oktoberfest.

Other highlights include:

- Five food exhibitors giving away samples: [Oh Graze](#), [ChefD Catering](#), [Sweet Girl Bakes](#), [Little Mushroom Catering](#), [The Dessert Artist / Petite Patties](#).

- Speakers: [Womiye Ojo](#) (Unboxed and Booked: From Personal Expression to Paid Opportunities at 11:30 a.m.), [The Daily Well Podcast](#) (Finding Your People in Your 30s & 40s at 12:15 p.m.), [Tammy Lee Hauser](#) (Release & Rise: Letting Go of Clutter during Life Transitions at 2:30 p.m.)

The first 150 attendees through the door get a special gift bag including a \$10 gift card for Conestoga Mall. All attendees are welcome to participate in the Passport Program for the opportunity to win an exciting grand prize.

Tickets can be purchased [HERE](#). More information and the full Women's Expo [event schedule](#) can be found at: <https://wrwomensexpo.ca/>

PHOTO ENCLOSED OF 2026 WOMEN OF THE YEAR FIRESIDE CHAT SPEAKERS AND WOMEN'S EXPO KEYNOTE SPEAKER.

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About [Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest](#)

The first Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest was celebrated in 1969 at Concordia Club in Kitchener, organized by a group of dedicated founders. The keg was tapped and history was made. Since then, Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest has developed its own traditions, becoming one of the largest Bavarian Festivals outside of Germany. Tens of thousands of visitors celebrate annually in our Festhallen, at local restaurants and by attending one of our many family and cultural events. More than just biergartens, Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest is committed to supporting the cultural, economic and social vitality of Waterloo Region, bringing millions of dollars in economic benefit to the Region each year.

Oktoberfest Cares provides funding for charitable partners and supports Festival initiatives that enrich our community such as the Onkel Hans Food Drive and keep admission costs low or free for favourites including the Women of the Year celebration and family-friendly events like KIDtoberfest, Oktoberfest Thanksgiving Day Parade and the Willkommen Platz. For more information visit www.oktoberfest.ca.

Media Contact:

Tracy Van Kalsbeek
Executive Director
Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest
519-616-0793 or tracy@oktoberfest.ca