



MINERVA

a year in review

2024

Empathy

Growth

Authenticity

Confidence

Courage

 MINERVA

Fun

 MINERVA



## to our minerva community

Happy New Year! As each year draws to a close, I reflect on activities, programs and initiatives from the previous 12 months. For 2024, with the celebration of our 25th anniversary, I also spent time thinking about Minerva's overall impact since its inception in 1999.

It has been gratifying to witness that what started 25 years ago has grown and evolved to remain relevant and transformational today, impacting the lives of thousands of women and girls.

Our Learning to Lead™ program, which started in 2002, has expanded and developed, and remains a flagship youth initiative. The Women Leading the Way™ program, which began in 2010, welcomed its 22nd cohort this fall. Our women's programming has expanded to include a continuum of training including Emerging Leaders, in-house cohorts, and the development of our first all genders leadership program.

In 2024, we activated the findings from our Unobstructed Journeys research report through presentations, webinars, and workshops to expose the challenges women are still facing in the workplace. Responding to the need we are hearing from participants, parents and educators, we piloted two new youth initiatives to equip youth with tools and tips to help navigate life's changes and challenges. These were a great success and will become permanent offerings in 2025.

We are thankful for our donors, sponsors, speakers, mentors, community partners and program participants for being part of the history and future of Minerva.

With gratitude



Tina Strehlke  
CEO, Minerva BC



## about minerva

Minerva BC is a Vancouver-based charity dedicated to advancing the leadership of women and girls. For over two decades, we have helped women across British Columbia expand their capacities through education, mentorship, and leadership training.

We also support the business community, and wider community, as we work together to break down visible and invisible barriers in the workplace and replace them with attitudes and systems that are supportive to women's achievement.

Our vision is a world where women and girls, in all their diversity, have equal power in decision-making spaces.



**Year at a Glance 2024** has been colour coded to our three central interconnected levers of change: **Developing Leaders**, **Challenging Bias**, and **Activating Inclusion**.

## january

- Youth Advisory Council (YAC) members welcomed
- Youth Power of Confidence Day at Aritzia
- Tina participates as a judge for the BC Business Women of the Year Awards

## february

- Women Leading the Way™ Cohort 21 begins
- Women Leading the Way™ TransLink Cohort 3 begins
- "Find Your Path" workshop delivered for youth in collaboration with Free Periods Canada

## march

- Michelle Pockey Leadership Awards and Bursaries presented to Shayla Chalifoux, Suzanne Coombs, and Rainwater Pootlass at the BIV Influential Women in Business Awards
- Minerva featured in Aritzia's International Women's Day campaign
- Tina serves as a judge for the BC Builders Code Awards
- Tina delivers a series of Unobstructed Journeys report findings webinars for Inclusivity
- Minerva partners with DIVERSEcity on the Women's Leadership Forum
- Emerging Leaders Cohort 7 begins
- Values session presented by YAC member at Odihi "Girlhood" event

## april

- Learning to Lead™ spring programming begins
- RBC cheque presentation event
- Bloom program for immigrant women Cohort 3 begins

## may

- Minerva presents at the WORTH Leadership Summit
- Tina and the YAC host a panel discussion and Q+A with Penticton Secondary School
- Learning to Lead™ in-person program in Prince George
- Confidence workshop delivered to UNBC students in Prince George
- Minerva's 25th Anniversary Celebration

## june

- Tina is a speaker at Vantage Point's conference on Building a Network of Peers session

## july

- Rise and Shine mental wellness workshops begin
- Confidence session presented by YAC member at Empowered Black Girl event

## august

- Two days of in-person workshops with ACCESS Canoe Leadership Program for Indigenous girls
- YAC members attend Bard on the Beach social

## september

- Tina Interviewed by Global BC Morning News on the state of gender equality in BC
- Face of Leadership™ Inclusive Leadership Forum
- Growing Green Leaders mentorship session
- Tina serves as a judge on the AFP Giving Heart panel
- Women Leading the Way™ Cohort 22 begins
- Women Leading the Way™ City of Vancouver in-house Cohort 2 begins
- Youth programs alumni participate in "Tuyo Towers" game night and provide feedback to game inventor
- Women Leading the Way™ TransLink Cohort 4 begins

## october

- Ready, Set, Resume! workshop hosted by the YAC mentorship committee
- Tina presents on her leadership journey as part of the Colliers x Northeastern Women in Leadership Series
- Emerging Leaders Cohort 8 begins
- Tina delivers workshop with MDA Space
- Learning to Lead™ Fall cohort begins
- Youth Leadership Award is presented to Natalya Asaad
- Mindful Moments youth podcast episode is released focused on Career Boost

## november

- Career Boost: Career and Mentorship one-day event
- TransLink Unobstructed Journeys executive panel and roundtable discussions
- Three Confidence workshops delivered at Pinetree Secondary in Coquitlam
- Corporate workshops delivered in Kamloops (AI)
- Tina participates as a panelist at the Salesforce Women's Network Summit
- Interactive workshop facilitated at the Pathways to Prosperity conference

## december

- Giving Tuesday Help Youth Lead Change campaign
- YAC Holiday Party
- Values session delivered at J.N. Burnett Secondary School

year at a glance 2024



develop  
leaders

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influence

“**What if a room was built where girls, balancing on the edge of their future, are shown the singular hue of their own magic, the stretching impact of their full and dazzling sunset on every person around them, before the doubt ever takes root.**”

Excerpt from 'if there was a room', created for the Minerva 25th anniversary by poet Kelsey Savage

## a year of remarkable growth

It was another record-setting year for our youth programs, kicking off with the Power of Confidence Day hosted by Aritzia in January. In addition to our flagship Learning to Lead™ program, we held in-person workshops in Prince George and Metro Vancouver, as well as a virtual mentorship session during Gender Equality Week.

To increase our impact, we also expanded our youth programming in response to the growing need we are hearing from program participants, parents and educators to equip youth with tools and tips to help navigate life's changes and challenges. This included:

- Piloting a new program designed to provide youth with the information and skills essential to nurturing their mental and emotional health and to help navigate life's challenges in a healthy way; and
- Introducing a career and mentorship initiative to prepare youth for the jobs of tomorrow.

## rise and shine

The Rise and Shine mental and emotional wellness program was created in response to youth's request for more mental health support. Workshops included interactive activities that allowed participants to practice wellness tools and build supportive connections with peers. Topics covered included self-awareness, boundary setting, reframing failure, self-compassion, stress, anxiety, and self-care. Youth also heard from inspiring mentors sharing their personal stories and wisdom for navigating challenges. Participants left with key skills to enhance their mental and emotional health in a fun, supportive environment.

To ensure the program resonated with youth, we conducted a focus group with Minerva youth alumni for feedback and suggestions. Members of Minerva's Youth Advisory Council also supported the virtual sessions as peer mentors, coaches, and friends, helping participants feel more at ease and comfortable sharing.

“**These are topics that can be hard to talk about; we love to be hard on ourselves and get gratitude from others, but it's so important that we also give ourselves that gratitude.**”

Rise and Shine youth focus group participant

### Program Delivery:

- Six virtual sessions in August for girls and gender-diverse youth in grades 8-12
- Two in-person sessions for Indigenous youth with ACCESS (Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society)
- One virtual session for Youth Advisory Council members





## youth leadership in action

Today's youth are entering an unprecedented time. Technological advances mean there are jobs today that did not exist five years ago, and the workforce of the future will be stepping into jobs and problems that do not even exist yet. Regardless of what jobs the future may hold, we are preparing youth with skills and capabilities to ensure lifelong economic and career success.

In 2024, as part of the **Youth Advisory Council (YAC)** program, Minerva developed a youth initiative focused on mentorship and career development both as a skill development opportunity and as a way for YAC members to put their leadership into meaningful action to prepare for next steps in their academic and professional journeys.

Throughout the year, the YAC was involved in every step of the design, development, marketing and execution of "**Career Boost: Empowering the Next Generation**", which took place during Canada Career Month in November. Held in Vancouver, the one-day career readiness event featured inspiring workshops, mentorship table conversations, sessions on career-related topics, peer networking and career information opportunities. Attendees were introduced to a variety of fields including those in the green economy, STEAM, sport, education and finance.

“ I want to let you know how much I enjoyed the Career Boost event. My friends and I could not stop raving about it on the way home. I loved the opportunity to learn from such accomplished women in a meaningful and intimate setting. One of my favourite events of the day was the speed mentoring. I received incredibly concise and inspiring advice that has sparked new ideas for my career aspirations.”



Our youth programs are offered at no cost to participants. We are grateful to our many funding partners who make this possible: **ALACS Fund, Aritzia, BC Hydro; BC Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA), Best Buy Canada, Eldorado Gold, Enbridge, Fluor, Hamber Foundation, The Matheson Family, Novak Family Foundation; RBC Foundation, Telus; Vancouver Community College (VCC)**, and many individual donors.

## women's leadership programs

### Program Evolution

**Women Leading the Way™** welcomed its 22nd cohort in September, and the impact of this program was clear from the strong turnout of alumni at the 25th anniversary party. Over the past 14 years, our women's programming has expanded to include the Emerging Leaders program for those at the start of their leadership journey, in-house cohorts that bring women from various departments and career levels together to develop leadership skills, and the **BLOOM leadership program**, delivered in partnership with Mother's Matter Centre (MMC) to offer accessible programming for immigrant women establishing careers in Canada. Building on our work with MMC to adapt content from **Emerging Leaders**, we were excited to form a new partnership in 2024 to develop a program based on feminist leadership principles for an all-gender cohort, which we will launch in early 2025.

**171 WOMEN  
COMPLETED  
OUR WOMEN'S  
LEADERSHIP  
PROGRAMS IN  
2024 – 35%  
INCREASE  
FROM 2023**

“ In an early session of the **Women Leading the Way™** program, we talked about influential people in our lives. It made me think about the great gift that I have being in a position of leadership, to be able to impact and inspire my team and create space for all of them to thrive. From that point of realization, I have kept the practice of deliberate reflection and vulnerability as a core tenant of my leadership. ”

Patricia Lucy, Director of Brand and Customer Experience, TransLink



### Women's Leadership Forum

Our efforts to support self-identified women and girls as leaders have led to valuable partnerships. On March 8th, we were honored to co-host the second annual **DIVERSEcity x Minerva Women's Leadership Forum** on International Women's Day. Over 300 women and allies gathered to celebrate women's achievements and engage in important conversations about the steps women must take to lead in their own lives. It was a day of connection, inspiration, and meaningful dialogue.



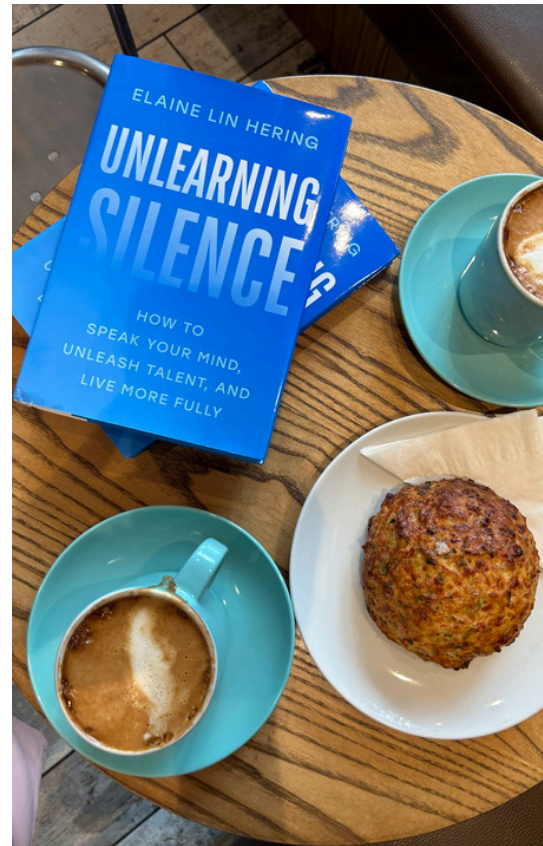
activating  
inclusion  
contribution

Our pillar of activating inclusion helps equip organizations and leaders with the knowledge, skills and practices to create equitable outcomes for women. Each year this is achieved by hosting workshops, webinars and our Inclusive Leadership Forum. 2024 was extra special as we were also able to connect at our anniversary celebration with so many women, allies and companies who have been working to advance gender equality in the workplace over the past 25 years.

## face of leadership™ inclusive leadership forum

The sixth annual Forum held several highlights and a few pleasant surprises. The three-day event is always a great opportunity to hear from individuals and organizations from around the province who are doing progressive work and conducting research in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion. In 2024, we welcomed a combination of local and international expertise which included American best-selling author Elaine Lin Hering who discussed her book *Unlearning Silence: How to Speak your Mind, Unleash Talent, and Live More Fully*. We were also able to spotlight research from Professor Lyndall Strazdins from the Australian National University, about how unequal time impacts women's health and career.

One of the great joys of our work is the new partnerships and reconnections that take place. During the preparation stage for the Forum sessions, two speakers shared that they had participated in Learning to Lead™ many years before. We also fostered new friendships, as a LinkedIn follow of Dr. Golnaz Golnaraghi led to her presenting at the Forum, and in turn extending an invitation to Minerva program facilitator, Shobna Kannusamy, to speak on a panel at the Accelerate Her Future's Summit in November.



“Thank you for putting together a conference filled with insightful and inspiring speakers, for such an engaging group. I can't wait for next year's conference.”

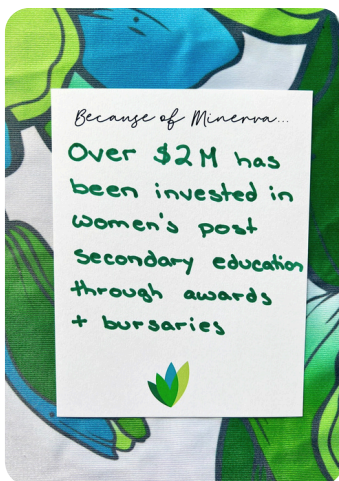
Forum Attendee

THE 2024 FORUM  
FEATURED 24  
PRESENTERS AND  
OVER 250 ATTENDEES

Thank you to our Overall Forum sponsors: **BC Lottery Corp (BCLC)**; **Best Buy Canada**; **PwC Canada**; and the Daily Forum sponsors: **TransLink**; **Odlum Brown**; **Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC)**.

# minerva's 25th anniversary celebration

What a night! At Minerva's 25th Anniversary Celebration there was a lot of laughter, more than a few tears, reunions and new friendships made. The years of impact were evident and reflected by those in the room, from the women who helped build the organization in the early days, to the Youth Advisory Committee members who are leading change within our youth programs and in their schools and community.



“ Such a beautiful event – heartfelt, celebratory, and inspiring – congratulations! I felt honoured to be amongst a room full of such wonderful women. ”

Anniversary Celebration Attendee



The event featured so many highlights, from TransLink WLW program participant, Patricia Lucy, sharing how her leadership has evolved through her participation in the Women Leading the Way™ program; Odlum Brown's Shelly Appleton-Benko delivering a beautiful tribute to Minerva founder Nancy McKinstry; Poet-in-Residence Kelsey Savage reciting the poem she wrote for the occasion; attendees showcasing their values at the PWC Canada photo wall; and a walk down memory lane with a display of program and event artifacts hosted by Minerva historian Marie Stenzel. All of this was capped off by the amazing and incomparable Nancy taking to the stage to share Minerva's origin story – the perfect addition to an inspiring celebration.



We are grateful to the sponsors who made our anniversary celebration possible: **TransLink; Odlum Brown; PwC Canada; Scotiabank Women Initiative®; Best Buy Canada; Jak's Beer Wine Spirits.**

challenge  
bias  
—  
visibility

Our work to Challenge Bias is possible through collaboration with community, government and media partners. Together, we are working to raise awareness of, and dismantle, the visible and invisible barriers women face which impacts their progression to positions of leadership.

## creating unobstructed journeys

In late 2023, we released the **Unobstructed Journeys** research report, which looked at barriers to gender equality in the workplace. Throughout 2024, we kept the conversation going with presentations, panels, webinars, roundtable discussions, and an interview on Global BC to delve deeper into the findings and issues.

**THIS YEAR, WE  
ENGAGED OVER 2800  
PEOPLE ACROSS BC  
THROUGH ONLINE AND  
IN-PERSON EVENTS**

## aritzia's international women's day campaign



International Women's Day is always a busy and important time for Minerva. This was especially true in 2024, when we were invited by Aritzia to be featured in their International Women's Day campaign.

Ten years ago, Minerva became one of Aritzia's first community partners and the relationship has continued to grow as they have supported our youth programs and hosted workshops to help young women develop skills and confidence to step into their own.

The campaign, which included Renée Tirado, Chief Impact Officer at Aritzia, Minerva CEO Tina Strehlke, and Rhea Morrow, Youth Programs Ambassador, highlighted Minerva's work, mission and impact. It also promoted Aritzia's limited-edition Women to the Power of Women collection with proceeds being donated to Minerva and their other community partner organizations that support women and girls.

Our work to Challenge Bias was made possible with support from **Power to Give** and **Pan American Silver**







## support our work

We are grateful for the financial support we received in 2024 which allowed us to continue delivering our existing events and programs as well as launch new initiatives.

As we continue to expand our reach and impact, please consider supporting our work in 2024. Donations to Minerva are eligible for a tax receipt. To give, please visit our secure online portal [minervabc.ca/ways-to-give/](https://minervabc.ca/ways-to-give/)

For information on sponsoring an event, program, or initiative, please contact us at [admin@minervabc.ca](mailto:admin@minervabc.ca)

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