

# “Yes We Can!”

~ By Irene Robillard, 1st Place Winner of the Essay Competition at the 2014 FWIO Provincial Conference



Can we revitalize the Women’s Institute (WI) and have the WI survive the 21st century? Yes, we can! Many things have changed in the last 117 years. However, we still have the same basic needs – to be valued as a person, to meet others socially, and to learn new things. We still want to meet other women and help our families, our community, and our country. We want to help the world.

Can we restructure this organization with minimal disruption? Yes, we can! We can be large in thought, word, and deed. We can be done with fault-finding and leave off self-seeking. We can stop being hasty in judgment. We can always be generous. We can take the necessary steps to work together for the common good of our organization, our communities, and our province.

Can we streamline our many levels? Yes, we can! We can put into action our better impulses straightforward and go unafraid from our comfort zone. We can stop saying: “But we always did it this way!” We can remove one or two of the organization’s levels. We can work out the details in a logical manner, remembering that in the big things of life we are one.

Can we change our conference? Yes, we can! We can combine our annual general meeting with the conference and make it an annual event. We can offer training for various offices and positions, as well as workshops to train the trainers in a variety of mini-courses.

Can we get Members interested in the provincial level of the organization? Yes, we can! We can rotate the newly formatted annual conference around the province to get more Members involved and enthused. We can do away with Area Voting Delegates. We can give all Members the right to vote on their president and executive at the Annual General Meeting.

Can we get more Members? Yes, we can! We can be more flexible in our meetings; both in time and day. We can minimize the business element of meetings. We can have informative, educational programs at every meeting.

Can we make the WI more enticing for younger women? Yes, we can! We can go where they are. We can use social media. We can reach out to them and ask them for their needs and wants. We can advocate for changes that younger women and society need. We can continue to provide training in basic homemaking skills but we can provide other training as well. For example, we can teach women about financial literacy, as well as healthy living and eating. We can offer walking groups and other social events.

Can we be the voice of rural women? Yes, we can. We can continue to be the conduit for our ROSE partners to reach the rural community. We can expand our outreach by partnering with other organizations and government.

Can we revitalize the Women’s Institute and have WI survive the 21st century? Can we? Yes, most definitely, we can!

## Provincial Conference 2014 - Competition Winners

### **Miniature Quilt**

First: Donna Thompson

Second: Myrtle Reid

Viewer's Choice: Donna Thompson

### **Essay**

First: Irene Robillard

Second: Brenda Shirley

Viewer's Choice: Jane Darlow

### **Greeting Cards**

First: Freda Leenders

Second: Frances Millen

Viewer's Choice: Frances Millen

