



Winter 2022

## CELEBRATING TOGETHER ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The Ban Righ Foundation Celebration 2022 will be a combination of two major annual events: our Spring Awards Ceremony, and the Ban Righ Foundation Inspiring Women Awards. When we realized that both events would have to be virtual again this year we decided to bring everyone together for one BIG celebration. As always, the Ban Righ Centre has a lot to celebrate!

Our **Spring Awards Ceremony** honours the determination and successes of mature women students. This year 13 students will receive awards.

These awards have been established by supporters whose gifts allow the Ban Righ Foundation to continue this tradition.

The other part of this Celebration is the **Ban Righ Foundation Inspiring Women Awards**. Women are nominated in two categories - the Mentorship Award which goes to a Faculty member, and the Leadership Award, which goes to a community leader.



Join us March 8th at 7:00 pm for a Facebook  
Premiere Event: [fb.com/TheBanRighCentre](https://fb.com/TheBanRighCentre).  
If you can't access Facebook and would like to join  
us, please contact [banrighcentre@queensu.ca](mailto:banrighcentre@queensu.ca).

## THIS YEAR'S INSPIRING WOMEN

### Dr. Rena Uptis - Mentorship Award



Dr. Rena Uptis has a long history of mentoring students at Queen's. Now a Professor Emerita of Education and Sustainability, over her career Rena has mentored countless students in experiential learning, art, and activism. She has a unique capacity for inspiring and nurturing students and peers. From the classroom to nature walks, to a lively dinner table, Rena shares her sharp intellect and her love of nature and the arts.

Rena's interdisciplinary work through her career as a scholar and as an educator, and as the founding director of the off-grid educational retreat, Wintergreen Studios, is a testament to her belief in how the arts and humanities can enlighten our complex and intertwined lives.

A group of five current and past women students nominated her for this year's Mentorship Award.

## Alejandra Zamora Flores - Leadership Award



Since her arrival from Mexico in 2016, the warmth, generosity, and compassion Alejandra Zamora Flores has had a big impact on diverse populations in Kingston. Ale puts her skills to work in community agencies including KEYS Job Centre where she takes part in youth and newcomer mentoring programs, the Skeleton Park Arts Festival, Kingston Community Health Centres, and the Kingston Latino Association. She works with local schools and school boards to inform about systemic barriers faced by immigrant and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) children. At Kingston Cooperative Housing, she spearheaded initiatives such as a children's community garden, helping to acquire playground equipment, and setting up classes for adult wellness.

Ale was nominated by a team of friends, colleagues and parents who have experienced first-hand the many gifts she has brought to the Community.

## Winter Celebration 2021

For the second year in a row, the Ban Righ Winter Celebration looked a little different. Rather than host an event for student moms and their families at the Centre, staff packed gift bags for each household. Each gift bag included a gingerbread house, treats for the family as well as grocery gift cards and gifts, including Queen's Tricolour mitts and hats!

At the end of the day, meals were delivered to the families, and we gathered on Zoom for a virtual Winter Feast. Ban Righ staff, board members, student moms and their kids connected to share stories and some laughs.

*"I cannot express in words how much color and laughter you brought to my place this holiday season- just like the ginger bread house! I dedicate this picture and the smile to you all, the amazing people of BRC, who continuously work for making our lives better and have always been there for us." - Antara*

## STAYING IN TOUCH

There are many ways to find out what is going on at the Ban Righ Centre. Our website has a whole new look and we regularly post about upcoming events on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. If you are in Kingston, we are always happy to welcome visitors in person at the Centre.



[queensu.ca/ban-righ-centre](https://queensu.ca/ban-righ-centre)



[instagram.com/banrighcentre](https://instagram.com/banrighcentre)



[twitter.com/banrighcentre](https://twitter.com/banrighcentre)



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## STUDENT MATTERS/STUDENTS MATTER

### Gaye Onurer, PhD Candidate in Sociology

Gaye is a regular at the Ban Righ Centre. She is coordinating our Winter Graduate Students Speakers Series, and is one of this year's Spring Awards recipients.

In her own words:

"I am an international PhD student in Sociology at Queen's. I research state oppression over academic freedom, and academic resistance as a new form of organized resistance. My academic interests include power and resistance, gender, race and ethnicity, displacement, citizenship and rights. At Queen's I was a founding board member of the International Students Working Group, the international student representative in the Sociology Graduate Student Association, and a member of the Social Healing and Reconciliatory Education of the Social Justice Committee.

The biggest challenge I have faced in my professional career as a tenured instructor at a university in my home country, Turkey, is state oppression over academic freedom. I am one of the initial signatories of a solidarity campaign in Turkey launched by a group of academics identified as Peace Academics which aimed to condemn state violence in the Kurdish region, and to call for a return to the abandoned peace talks between the Turkish state and the Kurdish armed movement. The initial signatories of this petition campaign were accused of treason and terror propaganda by the oppressive government.

Marginalized and criminalized due to the peace petition campaign, I decided to leave my home country and pursue a PhD degree at Queen's. I am singlehandedly parenting and supporting my 17-year-old son, who is going through the university application process in Ontario this year".



*Despite its challenges, life at Queen's is fun and fulfilling. I have met amazing people here who continuously inspire and encourage me. The international graduate students' community and Ban Righ Centre community play an important role in my life at Queen's. It would be much harder to survive difficult times and overcome problems without their care and support.*

## GRAD STUDENT SPEAKER SERIES - WINTER 2022

What do women graduate students from all across Queen's campus have in common? You'd be surprised! For our Winter 2022 Online Speakers Series we invited three graduate students to present their research. The goal is to create connections across disciplines. Gaye Onurer, a work-study student at the Ban Righ Centre is coordinating and producing the series, drawing on her broad network of friends and colleagues. Students are invited to talk about their research, with the proviso that the audience will be from different disciplines, and from all walks of life. Anyone is welcome to join us for the upcoming talks.

Talks are held at noon on Zoom (check out the [events page](#) on our website)

**Tuesday, February 1 Sabrina Masud**, PhD candidate, English. "What makes me visible? The power of invisibility in literature"

**Tuesday, March 1 Canan Sahin**, PhD candidate, Political Studies "Racialization of migrant labour as surplus population".

**Tuesday, March 22 Nathalia Santos Ocasio**, PhD candidate, Geography. "Creative art practices in social reproduction and social change".

WHERE IS SHE NOW?  
Elizabeth Racz, BA ('03)

Ahead of its time, the Ban Righ Centre provided community, safety, support and an inclusive space for mature students. I will never forget the warm atmosphere, soup cooking on the stove, and a printer always in the background churning out an assignment. It was a home for me, and I will always be thankful for it.

I am the National Research & Program Officer at Realize, and have concurrently started my Ph.D. in Public Health. Realize is a leader and catalyst for improving the health and well-being of people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities, across the lifespan, through integrated research, education, policy and practice.

I lead research and knowledge translation projects, as well as support program initiatives identified by Realize's National Program Leads. This includes gathering and reviewing evidence to inform the development of resources, programs and policies.



WHO WE ARE

The Ban Righ Centre relies on a team of experienced and dedicated staff to provide supports and services to mature women students at Queen's.

We have been working harder than ever to provide student support in person, as well as via Zoom, email, and telephone. It takes creativity, time, and persistence to stay connected with our students. We provide one-on-one student advising; daily online drop-ins, provide quiet spaces to work, and offer targeted online programming including Daily Stretching, Discussion Groups, Guest Speakers and more.

Ban Righ Centre Staff

- Susan Belyea: Director
- Gamila Abdalla: Student Advisor
- Lisa Webb: Student Advisor and Program Planner
- Nikisha Grant Ridley: Administrative Support

The Ban Righ Foundation board of directors sets policy and guides strategic planning for the organization. The Board includes members of the Queen's community, alumnae, students, and Kingston community members.

Ban Righ Foundation Board of Directors 2021-2022

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Mel Côté          | Sarah Kastner           |
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| Connie Taylor     | Ozlem Atar              |
| Xin Sun           | Nancy Butler            |
| Alka Sood         | Asha Varadharajan       |
| Susan Belyea      | Ellie Sadinsky          |
| Lisa Webb         | Blake Noyes             |
| Erin Clow         | Amber Hastings Truelove |

THANK YOU

Our sincere thanks to all of you who have made a priority out of giving to the Ban Righ Foundation this year. Your gifts – large and small – make a difference.

The Ban Righ Foundation continues to receive generous gifts from our donors and for that we are truly grateful. Your contributions help us to assist mature women students and students who are mothers to achieve their goals.

Help us with our mission to provide mature women students and student mothers with the services and supports that help them thrive at Queen's University.

Donations can be made through our website at

[queensu.ca/ban-righ-centre/donate/making-gift](https://queensu.ca/ban-righ-centre/donate/making-gift)

or mail a cheque made out to Queen's University (Ban Righ Centre) to:

Queen's University  
Gift Services  
Old Medical Building  
99 University Avenue  
Kingston, ON K7L 3N6