

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 2023

FAMILY, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HARM REDUCTION

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The Community Engagement team has developed a partnership with Good Food on the Move to subsidize a pop up market at 280 Rochester located in the Rochester Heights Neighborhood. Food insecurity is one of the most important concerns the community has identified. To meet this need, the community engagement team is working with partners and volunteers to organize future markets.



Photo above: Pop-up food market in partnership with Good Food on the Move.

In the Mechanicsville neighborhood, the Community Engagement team is planning to shape a Tenant Circle at 18 Burnside, starting with coffee and chat weekly groups. The purpose will be to work with community leaders to assess needs and develop a corresponding action plan for the year.

The Community Engagement team is in partnership with Ottawa Community Housing, United Way and PCL Construction to plan a grand opening of LeBreton new space as a big splash.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, VOLUNTEERS & STUDENTS

As we approach National Volunteer Week 2023, with the theme "Volunteering Weaves Us Together," we have an opportunity to celebrate the individual and collective actions of our volunteers in creating a strong, interconnected, and vibrant community.



By sharing their time, talent, and energy to support one another, volunteering truly weaves us together and strengthens the fabric of our community.

To show our appreciation, we will be sending out a thank-you message to our volunteers next week, as well as posting it on social media and including it in our volunteer newsletter. We will also be reminding our staff via email to fill out a form and let us know the names of the volunteers they would like to recognize and the gifts they would like to receive. We have some great new gift items this year for our wonderful volunteers.

The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program registration is proving to be highly successful as we approach the tax return deadline on April 30th. Our dedicated volunteers and staff are working tirelessly to meet the needs of our community and clients, with demand increasing dramatically each year. This year alone, we have received over two hundred and seventy client registrations so far and completed and returned one hundred and ninety four tax files.

YET KEEN SENIOR'S DAY CENTRE

On March 18th, 2023, Yet Keen wrapped up the art program collaboration "Keen and Creative" with a celebration event at the Ottawa Art Gallery. Approximately one hundred and twenty people attended including forty seniors from Yet Keen. The event was also a fundraiser co-organized by artists Don Kwan and Ed Kwan, supported by the Ottawa Community Foundation. The afternoon featured performances, an art auction, and an exhibition tour showcasing Yet Keen seniors' artwork created during the workshop series in the last year. The exhibition will be moved to Yet Keen in April.



ROCHESTER HEIGHTS COMMUNITY HOUSE

Our Afterschool Program is now up and running in our new Location at 865 Gladstone Avenue. The Grand opening of our new Community House space will be May 3, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm.

Rochester Heights Community House continues to provide emergency food to residents in need. We continue doing weekly community outreach in priority neighbourhoods. This month we visited four hundred and seven households to inform residents of our services, provide key messages from Ottawa Community Housing and Ottawa Public Health, and to supply immediate support for residents experiencing isolation. We support clients daily, by connecting them to services, assisting with applying for housing benefits, and accessing emergency food resources.

HARM REDUCTION

The month of March has been very busy for the Harm Reduction Team, and April is shaping up to be no different! From a clinical perspective, we are beginning to see the first signs of xylazine in the drug supply in Ottawa. At SWCHC we are seeing more frequent and complex overdoses. Naloxone is NOT effective against xylazine, and we are seeing clients taking much longer to come out of overdoses and requiring much longer monitoring. We are also seeing more complex wounds and more behavioral issues and psychosis. As a response, there is enhanced communication with Consumption and Treatment Service and harm reduction partners regarding overdose trends. There are ongoing discussions throughout our staff meetings and we continue to share information at our Community Liaison Committee. Additionally, we are bolstering our hiring to ensure the Centre is well staffed through the summer, and are observing other cities to see if similar trends may be relevant to us locally. We look forward to making some connections with Toronto organizations at the Alliance conference in June.

From an operational perspective, we are very pleased that our pilot funding for the Drug Overdose Prevention and Education team, Homeless Crisis Outreach team and Safe Supply programs has been renewed for another year. The leadership team has begun the visioning process for this and are planning a staff retreat for May to involve the broader team.

Table 1. Xylazine identifications (count(n)) per province or territory (2012 – 2022)*

| Province/ Territory | Year | | | | | | | | | | | Total | |
|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | Count (n) | Percent (%) |
| Alberta | - | - | - | 4 | 6 | - | - | 138 | 86 | 31 | 34 | 299 | 12.9 |
| British Columbia | - | - | - | 5 | - | - | - | 58 | 99 | 70 | 260 | 492 | 21.2 |
| Manitoba | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | 4 | 0.2 |
| New Brunswick | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 3 | 5 | 0.2 |
| Nova Scotia | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 0.0 |
| Ontario | 1 | 1 | - | 7 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 414 | 1,011 | 1,458 | 62.7 |
| Quebec | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 2 | 12 | 36 | 52 | 2.2 |
| Saskatchewan | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 8 | 3 | 12 | 0.5 |
| Yukon | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 0.0 |
| Total | 1 | 1 | - | 16 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 205 | 198 | 536 | 1,350 | 2,324 | 100.0 |

Table above: In 2021, a sharp increase of Xylazine identifications from samples submitted by law enforcement agencies in Ontario was observed, with a total of 414 identifications in 2021 and 1,011 in 2022, compared to 9 in 2020. In 2022, both British Columbia and Ontario observed an increase in the number of Xylazine identifications. (Health Canada).

ACB/HIV PREVENTION STRATEGY

The Strategy worker worked with other community members and implemented several activities especially for Black Mental Health Week. One was a virtual event and conversation exploring the intersection between HIV and Sexual Health Stigma in the African Caribbean Black community. Panel discussion featured speakers from the community.

ANONYMOUS HIV TESTING OUTREACH

Testing continues onwards, in program promotion we have added the option for people to text the outreach worker to set up appointments, which has already seen uptake.

OTTAWA BLACK MENTAL HEALTH COALITION (OBMHC)

In addition to the virtual launch and closing events, this year's Black Mental Health Week activities included our first in person event. The Mental Health and Wellness Exposition featured fireside chats with guest speakers Reuben Nashali, Ose Omorgie and Shakir Ishak who spoke to the audience which included members of the community, service providers and first responder teams from police and paramedics.

This year, OBMHC partners hosted fifteen collaborative events, both virtually and in person around the city.

Black Mental Health Week Ottawa was highlighted by CBC news (Ottawa Morning with Robyn) and CTV News.

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-100/clip/15970494>



Ottawa Morning with Robyn Bresnahan - March 7, 2023: Black mental health week



CBCOttawaMorning
@OttawaMorning

Tonight at 6 pm, [@tylersimmonds](#) will give a virtual talk for Black Mental Health Week. Details here:

BLACK MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

March 1-7 2023 in Ottawa

Black Mental Health Week (BMHW) highlights the programs, services and issues impacting ACB mental health in Ottawa.

eventbrite.ca

Black Mental Health Week 2023: Exploring Stigma and Black Mental Health
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#BMHW2023

CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

We engaged community youth ages eleven and up through Babysitter's training. They learned about caring for young children, including younger siblings and keeping them safe. It was so well received that we will offer it again in April.

We are currently supporting four Early Childhood Educator students and continue to be quite engaged with Algonquin College. Staff take on the added responsibility of student supervision which benefits both the children and the student learner.



April 10th, 2023 Babysitter Training!

When: Monday April 10th 2023
9:00

SOLD OUT

Pizza Lunch Included!

To register, contact:
Meghan Macdonell
mmacdone@swchc.on.ca
613-238-8210 ext. 2508

- Being a responsible leader
- Caring for children and creating safe environments
- How to keep children of different ages entertained, and
- How to prepare for your first babysitting job!



PRIMARY CARE AND REGIONAL PROGRAMS

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

KIDS COME FIRST PARTNERSHIP

Primary Health Care continues to work closely with partners of the Kids Come First Health Team to provide an easy-to-use online booking system that will help families – especially those without access to primary care – catch up on routine childhood immunizations. All complete immunizations will automatically be sent to the local public health unit. The Primary Health Care team is preparing to offer three catch-up clinics between May and August. Once confirmed full details will be available through the Centre's website and social media.

MENTAL HEALTH AND COUNSELLING

The Mental Health and Counseling team, and more specifically the Black Mental Health team, participated in the development and delivery of the three main events during Black Mental Health Week, in addition to developing and hosting three events in collaboration with community partners.

In collaboration with the Aids Committee of Ottawa, SWCHC delivered a creative workshop aimed at addressing grief, relationships, boundaries and self-care within the Black community. The themes explored and discussed were inspired by Solange Knowles' album: "A Seat at the Table". A total of twenty-two individuals participated in the workshop and received mental health resource packages.

The SWCHC Black Mental Health Program and HIV Strategy worker collaborated to facilitate a panel discussion on Black sexuality & mental wellness. There were seventeen participants who joined online. The panel event aimed to discuss the intersection between HIV, sexual health stigma and how it impacts the ACB community. Panelists were invited to share their take on stigma, HIV management and prevention and finding culturally affirming resources. Panelists were four HIV/sexual health experts (community outreach workers, medical professionals, community developers and strategy workers).

SWCHC collaborated with the Canadian Women of Colour Leadership Network to host a panel discussion aimed at addressing the challenges Black post-secondary students face when navigating mental health resources. Participants who attended the virtual panel discussion received information about mental health resources.

