



PARKDALE QUEEN WEST

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE



- Jingle Dress Dancing at Allan Gardens with Danni McKenna of the Niiwin Wendaanimak Program, September 30, 2021

HONOURING AND REMEMBERING TORONTO'S INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Every year, the Niiwin Wendaanimak (Four Winds) Wellness Program at Parkdale Queen West holds a number of activities and events that celebrate Indigenous cultural traditions and honour Indigenous experiences, such as 'Every Child Matters' on July 1, and 'Orange Shirt Day' on September 30. Last year, September 30 was recognized by the federal government as the annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

(Continued next page)

What's Inside

- 4 Niiwin Wendaanimak Program: Creating healing spaces for Indigenous people
- 5 Harm reduction supports in times of COVID and beyond
- 6 Healthy Nail Salon in the news
- 7 A vision of decriminalization built on the voices of people who use substances
- 8 Collaboration and education, key in 'access to diabetes care'
- 9 Nail Technicians' Network Photovoice Exhibit
- 10 HIRAETH Photovoice Exhibit, continued
- 11 Clients' experiences accessing virtual services

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT



On behalf of the Board of Directors, I bring New Year's greetings to each of you, hoping this message finds you safe and well and finding ways to navigate the challenges these difficult times present.

As we begin a new year, we reflect on the Centre's role over the past year in providing ongoing support to our communities through primary care, counselling, health promotion and harm reduction services.

We mourn those members of our communities we lost last year, as a result of the overdose epidemic, as a product of the housing crisis, as a consequence of health and social inequities that the current COVID-19 crisis has laid bare.

We celebrate the growth of harm reduction services throughout the Centre and in the COVID-19 isolation sites, and through safer opioid supply services and safe consumption services at our Parkdale and Queen West sites.

We celebrate the Niiwin Wendaanimak Indigenous Wellness Program, and commit ourselves to honouring and respecting Indigenous voice, leadership and governance frameworks that exemplify authentic allied relationship.

We celebrate the ongoing funding and partnerships that support the Healthy Nail Salon Project that is committed to reducing the negative health impacts of working in nail salons and advocating for healthy and just work environments for nail technicians.

We celebrate the exceptional strength, innovation, and dedication of the Centre's staff who, under these challenging circumstances, continue to provide equitable, accessible urban healthcare for people where, when, and how they need it.

We continue to be committed to acting now to secure the recovery for all.

May the New Year bring greater equity, justice, and hope to each of you, and to the communities we serve.

Bernard King
President, Board of Directors

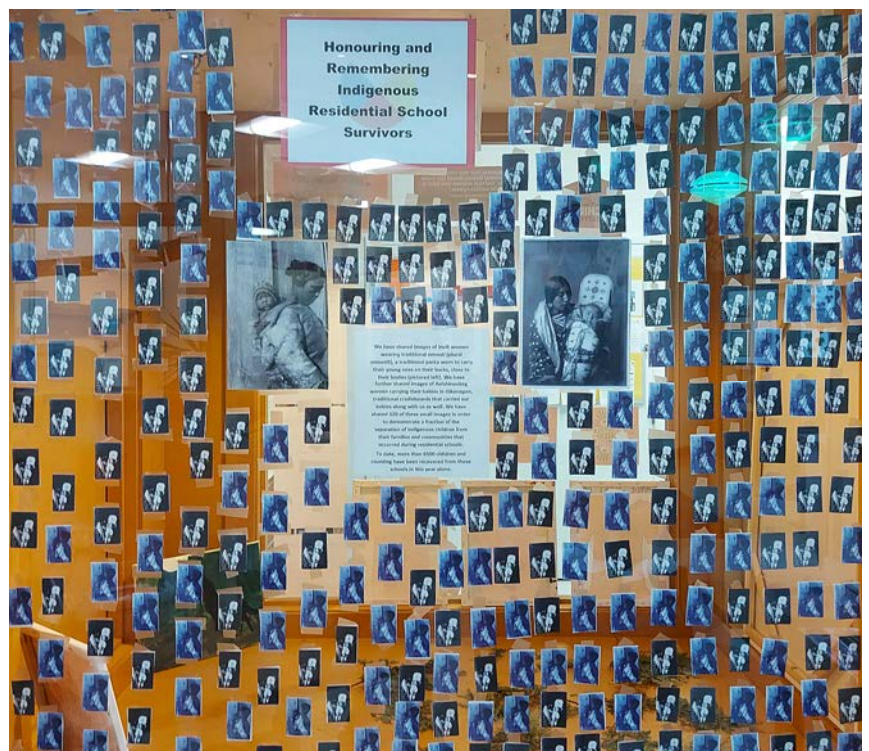
HONOURING AND REMEMBERING... (Continued from cover page)

In June 2021, the federal government passed legislation to mark September 30 as the **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**. The observance was proposed in 2015 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which under Action 80 called upon the federal government, in collaboration with Indigenous peoples, to establish a statutory holiday "to honour survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process".

The day coincides with **Orange Shirt Day**, which was established by an Indigenous-led grassroots movement named 'the Orange Shirt Society' to recognize the colonial legacy of residential schools. The name 'Orange shirt' was chosen to honour the experience of Phyllis Webstad, a survivor whose new orange shirt was taken from her on her first day at a residential school at age 6. The date of September 30 was chosen because it was the time of year when Indigenous children were removed from their families and forced to attend residential schools.

Not history, but the living legacy of colonialism and cultural genocide in Canada

The findings of the remains of 215 Indigenous children which were recovered on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia in 2021 continue. Since, more remains have been uncovered at residential schools across Turtle Island (North America). To this day, thousands of unmarked graves have been located, and many Nations across Turtle Island remain in mourning. This only contributes to the intergenerational trauma and ongoing grief Indigenous communities have endured for centuries. (Continued)



Above: A commemoration display at the Parkdale site, which includes 320 images of traditional cradles worn by Indigenous people to carry their babies, to show a small fraction of the Indigenous children separated from their families and communities during the residential schools.



Above: 'Orange Shirt Day' display at the Queen West site

In Canada, the deep intergenerational trauma among Indigenous peoples as a result of colonialism first came in the form of land disposessions and assimilative policies and practices, including the residential school system and, later, the 'Sixties Scoop', in which Indigenous children were removed from their families in disproportionate numbers to be adopted or to grow up in foster care, outside of their communities. The last of the residential schools in Canada closed in 1997, but the abuse children endured within them has lasting emotional and physical effects which have remained for generations.

Awareness of the scope of intergenerational trauma is still low today. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report from 2015, too many Canadians know little or nothing about the history of colonization of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Lack of historical knowledge, coupled with the lack of understanding of intergenerational trauma and the ongoing present-day trauma of anti-Indigenous racism, has had a significant impact on Indigenous communities which often results in a myriad of social problems such as addictions, poor physical and mental health, violence, homelessness and poverty, among others. Thus, the importance of creating healing spaces where Indigenous people can learn from their Elders, better understand the legacy of trauma, and experience their cultural teachings that can help them work through it.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30 is meant to be a day for awareness of and reflection on Canada's colonial history and its intergenerational impacts on Indigenous peoples. This new holiday is also an opportunity to reaffirm our continual commitment and ongoing work, not only to learn about the history of Indigenous peoples, but to continually address oppression, exclusion, anti-Indigenous racism, and all forms of racism.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The story broke last May 2021 when the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc Nation in Kamloops said a section of land was searched at the former school with ground-penetrating radar and found what were believed to be the remains of up to 215 children. But the oral histories of Indigenous Peoples for generations have spoken of the existence of such grave sites, and in the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report the question was asked of the Canadian government and church: "Where are the Children buried?" We must remember that the residential school system was a government designed and sanctioned "education" scheme specifically designed to "kill the Indian in the child" or as Duncan Campbell Scott, the deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs (1913-1932) often quoted Canada's goal to "get rid of the Indian problem". These so-called schools were a clear government approach to systematically undermine Indigenous, First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures across Canada. We join Indigenous Peoples across Canada as we collectively grieve the lives of Indigenous children found on the sites of these former residential facilities. We join in solidarity with demands for action and commit to work that pushes for action, knowing that to remain silent or take no action is to be complicit with the genocidal acts and intents of these so-called schools.

United Nations (UN) General Assembly proclaimed 2015-2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent, and we are reminded with irony the theme they defined for this decade: recognition, justice, and development. I say irony as we witness the injustice of what some UN officials have called the vaccine apartheid with the denial of vaccine access to African countries as well as the world-wide mobilization against anti-Black racism after the videotaped murder an African American man, George Perry Floyd Jr. by a police officer. Right here in this province, if you are Black or from another racialized group, Indigenous, or low-income, your communities have higher rates of COVID, twinned with greater barriers to accessing vaccination and the material supports needed if you test COVID positive. Therefore, we continually strive to bring an anti-racism, decolonial and equity lens to how we do the work.

We have also experienced many losses due to the poisoned drug supply: including literally right at our doors. There were 339 suspect -drug related deaths reported in December 2021 in Ontario, and the Chief Coroner's Office also reported that between January and September 2021, there were 2,052 opioid-related deaths in Ontario. This is a public health crisis equal to the COVID-19 pandemic and requires equally urgent public health measures and actions.

The work that we do daily of providing services and keeping good company with the clients are acts of care for social change. For this work I say thank you continually to the staff at Parkdale Queen West and to those in our communities for their support of our work.

Angela Robertson

NIIWIN WENDAANIMAK: CREATING HEALING SPACES FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The Niiwin Wendaanimak (Four Winds) Wellness Program, through its ongoing process of strengthening the program, has incorporated many traditional healing practices and activities, offering members an opportunity to reconnect with their traditional cultures, values and practices.

As of the spring 2021, the Program holds traditional Sacred Fire Pit ceremonies regularly at the Parkdale site. In this traditional Indigenous ceremony, group members offer their traditional medicines to the Sacred Fire; their prayers and wishes are brought to the Creator.

A series of walks through Toronto's historical landmarks, such as the Lower Simcoe Mural which celebrates Indigenous art and history, offer group members an opportunity to learn about their history, traditional arts, and teachings from various Elders in Toronto's Indigenous communities.

Painting workshops provide a space for people to commemorate annual events such as Orange Shirt Day through the creation of posters and hand-painted 'orange shirts'. These Indigenous art pieces continue to be exhibited at both Parkdale and Queen West sites.

Entrenched in Niiwin Wendaanimak's programming is the practice of harm reduction that creates a non-judgmental

space in which community members' dignity and autonomy are respected. Members know they are welcomed and worthy of healing no matter where they are at in life, and their right to traditional healing is always reaffirmed within the space.

"Witnessing first-hand the effects of cultural reconnection for our street-based community has been eye-opening. Many in the community have gone for years, if not lifetimes, being denied the right to access traditional healing spaces... It is a privilege to do the work, to give our community this opportunity to reconnect and heal."

- Beth Luttenberger, Indigenous Health Promoter

ORANGE SHIRT DAY'S HEALING GATHERING

On September 30, 2021, Parkdale Queen West clients, staff and community members gathered at Allan Gardens on Orange Shirt Day to commemorate the children that attended the Indian Residential School/Day School and intergenerational survivors.

Organized by Toronto Indigenous Harm Reduction, the event opened with a prayer from Elder Vivian Recollect, Indigenous Health Promoter at Parkdale Queen West, followed with drumming, guest speakers, traditional dancing, and feast by Dashmaawaan Bemaadzinjin.

Right: Vivian Recollet and Danni McKenna, student with the Niiwin Wendaanimak Program



HARM REDUCTION SUPPORTS IN TIMES OF COVID AND BEYOND

Parkdale Queen West works collaboratively with several community partners in Toronto to implement harm reduction programs aimed to reducing overdose fatalities, decrease transmission of COVID-19, and providing supports for people who are in isolation within the shelter system.

With a focus on overdose prevention, intervention, and access to clinical support, these peer-supported programs allow for a collective effort to provide harm reduction supports during the COVID pandemic, while looking at long-term solutions to provide dignifying and respectful care within the population.



Launched by the City of Toronto in December 2020, the Integrated Prevention & Harm Reduction Initiative (iPHARE) was developed in response to Toronto's substantial rise in fatal opioid overdoses and shelter related deaths which increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Niiwin Wendaanimak to partner on innovative crisis response pilot

Starting this spring, the Niiwin Wendaanimak (Four Winds) program at Parkdale Queen West will partner with 2-Spirited People of the First Nations and ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency on the implementation and delivery of a Community Crisis Support Service Pilot to divert mental health crisis calls to community responders rather than police services.

This new Community Crisis Support Service Pilot, which was announced in January this year, will be implemented by community agencies in four geographically-based areas of Toronto where apprehensions under the Mental Health Act and 911 calls for people in crisis are the highest.

The service seeks to better support community health, wellness and safety by introducing an alternative model of crisis response that is community-led, person-centred and trauma-informed, with a focus on harm reduction, and it will involve teams of trained professionals, including nurses, crisis counsellors and peer workers, who will respond to mental health calls that do not involve threats to public safety.

The Community Crisis Support Service Pilot will launch in June, with Niiwin Wendaanimak program taking part in the downtown west pilot which will be Indigenous-led, and spearheaded by 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations.

The program provides funding to community partners, including 8 sheltering sites and 7 harm reduction/health partner agencies, including Parkdale Queen West, which collaborate with shelter operators in providing integrated harm reduction supports to shelter residents.



Above: iPHARE partners Gloria Alowo (Regent Park CHC) and Jon Graham (Street Health)

MOVID (mobile COVID and harm reduction outreach services)

A complement of iPHARE is MOVID, a mobile harm reduction team consisting of staff from Parkdale Queen West CHC and the Neighbourhood Group that focuses on implementing and supporting harm reduction needs for clients who are in isolation within the shelter system.

MOVID currently supports 8 designated shelter locations across the GTA in partnership with 5 shelter partners (Homes First, St. Felix, Salvation Army, Christie Ossington Neighborhood Centre and Dixon Hall).

Parkdale Queen West Healthy Nail Salon featured in the media as part of University of Toronto's research study

The University of Toronto study which aimed to assess chemical exposure hazards in Toronto's discount nail salons was published on February 14 in the journal *Environmental Science and Technology* with significant findings for the nail salon industry.

The study, which was conducted in collaboration with Parkdale Queen West's Healthy Nail Salon Program and the Healthy Nail Salons Network, found alarming levels of hazardous chemicals that could impact the health of nail salon workers. Researchers are calling for better regulatory approaches to address occupational exposure and protect vulnerable populations.

The Healthy Nail Salon Program and its community partners have advocated for the regulation of better standards for nail salon workers for many years.



JACKIE LANG, ADVOCATE *EXTRAORDINAIRE*

Integral to the advocacy work of the Healthy Nail Salon Program at Parkdale Queen West is Jackie Lang, Community Health Worker. A former nail technician herself, Jackie has been highlighting concerns about the safety of workers in nail salons for over 10 years.

In addition to the work she does of facilitating safety and awareness workshops for nail technicians, Jackie takes every available opportunity to bring nail salon safety issues to the forefront. She was the voice for nail technicians in the University of Toronto research study which appeared on City News and CBC radio, calling for the regulation of safe practices in the nail salon industry.



ART MAKING WITH SENIORS

In the fall of 2021, Parkdale Queen West partnered with Making Art Making Change (MAMC) to implement an art-making program for seniors in the community. MAMC is a non-profit organization dedicated to designing and delivering individualized art-based projects that bring people together in a safe space to share their lived experiences and use art as an expressive catalyst.

The program's goal was to engage seniors in a series of conversations about identity, memory, relationships and their experiences during the COVID pandemic, while making art. For the seniors, it was a powerful experience. We plan to hold an exhibit of their art in the near future.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month in February each year, is an opportunity to learn more about, and to celebrate the achievements and important contributions that Black people have made to the history and continued growth of Canada.

Black History Month is also an important opportunity to deepen our understanding of, and commitment to, addressing anti-Black racism that Black people continue to experience to this day.

At Parkdale Queen West, we work year-round to support our clients, many of whom are Black, by providing primary health care, harm reduction and overdose prevention services, counselling, case management, and health promotion supports, to help secure care with dignity and free from racism.

Above: Banner created by staff to honour Black colleagues in celebration of Black History Month

A vision of decriminalization built on the needs and voices of people who use substances

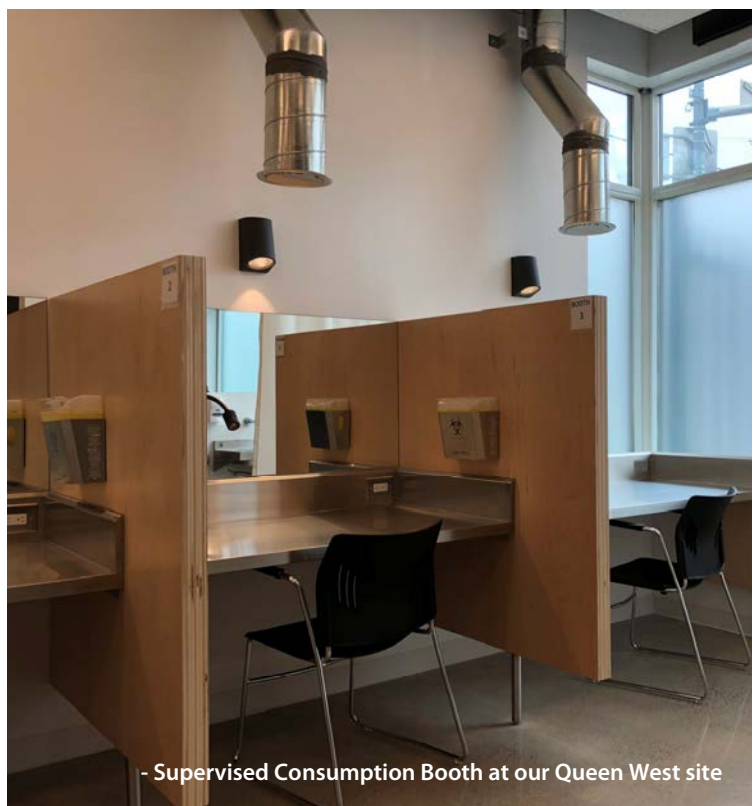
Parkdale Queen West CHC is part of the Toronto Public Health working group to advise on the development of a 'Toronto Model' of decriminalization of drugs for personal use.

In November, 2021, the City's Chief Medical Officer of Health, with approval from the City's Board of Health, submitted an Exemption Application to Health Canada Health and is now awaiting a decision.

We know that decriminalization of drugs is a necessary component of ending the stigma and discrimination of people who use substances. Daily through our harm reduction programs, supervised consumption services, primary care and safer opioid supply programs, we witness and respond to the tragic and preventable impacts of criminalization.

At Parkdale Queen West we support a vision of decriminalization that is built on the needs and voices of people who use substances and that simultaneously attempts to address the need for a regulated and safer supply of drugs to support the end of the overdose crisis.

Parkdale Queen West CHC, along with many other community partners, researchers and people who use drugs continue to support the work as members of the City's Decriminalization Reference Group. We will keep you informed.



- Supervised Consumption Booth at our Queen West site

PQW Executive Director recognized for outstanding contributions to advancing social justice and health equity

In 2021, Parkdale Queen West Executive Director Angela Robertson, was recognized by the Alliance for Healthier Communities and the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, for her outstanding contributions to advancing health equity and social justice in our communities.

In its Annual General Meeting in June, the Alliance for Healthier Communities awarded Angela with the *Denise Brooks Health Equity Champion Award*. The

award recognizes individuals, like Angela, who make outstanding contributions to dismantling barriers to equitable health and championing policies and interventions that challenge discrimination and oppression and address social conditions causing health inequities, including racism against Black and Indigenous people.

Also in 2021, the Dalla Lana School of Public Health in partnership with Closing the Gap Healthcare, recognized Angela's extraordinary contributions to advancing health equity during the pandemic through its *Pillars of the Pandemic* series. The series was created to honour the contributions that health and healthcare professionals and volunteers across Ontario have made to public health and healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Angela's contributions include advocacy and planning for collecting socio-demographic data related to COVID-19 cases, ensuring unsheltered and homeless populations and CHC community testing teams were prioritized for access to vaccinations, leading community, and advancing development of a Black Health Plan and integration of anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism strategies in COVID and recovery work.



EDUCATION AND COLLABORATION, KEY IN 'ACCESS TO DIABETES CARE'



On **World Diabetes Day** on November 14 and throughout the month individuals, organizations, and people around the world team up to bring attention to diabetes. World Diabetes' theme 2021 '**Access to Diabetes Care**', which is to be carried through 2023, is meant to highlight the barriers to getting the medicine, technologies, support, and care millions need to manage the condition, 100 years after insulin was first used for diabetes treatment.

Working interdisciplinary to offer patients with diabetes the best possible care

For the Parkdale Queen West's primary care team, 'access to diabetes care' means working collaboratively in a number of coordinated efforts to address the complex needs of people with diabetes. Diabetes is a chronic health condition which varies by type, but no matter what type, diabetes can lead to serious health conditions, poor mental health, and a myriad of social and economic challenges.

Ongoing communication and collaboration among healthcare providers ensures that when patients who are diagnosed with diabetes or are at risk of developing diabetes come to the Centre, they are linked with foot care, case management, and diet and nutrition programs that will help them manage the condition. In addition to medical treatment, much of the work focuses on education, prevention, and screening for early detection of potential complications associated with diabetes.

Diabetes education is an ongoing piece in every patient's check-up, as is advocating for and connecting the patient with external resources. And so is outreach in the community to bring education and supports to people who are socially isolated.

Many people who are pre-diabetic or have been diagnosed with diabetes are socially isolated due to the stigma associated with the condition, particularly for people diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes.

The burden of diabetes care is complex. Both patients and primary care providers face barriers related to time constraints and limited resources. Access to diabetes care is more difficult for people who are severely impacted by the social determinants of health. Thus, the importance of building partnerships with organizations to access medical supplies, food resources and community programs.

Building trust with the patient is also important. For a person diagnosed with diabetes "the diagnosis itself is overwhelming", says Jane Rajah, Diabetes Nurse at Parkdale Queen West. For example, a single mom, who is taking care of an elderly parent, has recently lost her job, cannot afford the medications prescribed by her doctor, and is not eating well, may not readily attend existing programs and services which can help her with her situation. For this reason, "It is important to connect with people with diabetes on a personal level and build trust... If we don't build trust, they won't come" says Rajah.



DIABETIC RETINOPATHY SCREENING COMING TO PARKDALE QUEEN WEST

We know that it is very important for people diagnosed with diabetes to have eye examinations to detect retinopathy at an early stage. Retinopathy screening is not readily available, and for many people living with diabetes, engaging in screening can be a challenge. Many people are not interested in navigating a hospital to attend appointments for screening, partly because they might find it difficult to physically navigate the spaces and partly because of distrust of the healthcare system.

For the past two years, Parkdale Queen West CHC has engaged with Diabetes Action Canada in a research project which aims to improve access, equity, and potentially reduce the cost of Tele-Retina screening delivery for clients.

Among the goals of the study are to:

- Increase the number of screened individuals at risk of developing retinopathy and to refer to treatment those at risk of vision loss;
- Evaluate patient and provider experiences of those who participate in the study;
- Describe the severity of diabetic retinopathy in people who agree to be screened;
- Evaluate implementation and policies associated with the transfer and use of healthcare administrative data related to diabetes retinopathy screening.

We are pleased to share the news that thanks to a donation made by the University Health Network Foundation, we now have the equipment for retinopathy screening. More information will follow as we move forward with the planning and implementation of this very important project.

COPING DURING THE PANDEMIC WITH STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE

Nail Technicians' Network Photovoice Exhibit

Like many others, the nail salon sector has faced many challenges with the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic. Since the onset of the pandemic, nail technicians were not able to work or had few work opportunities. Beside the financial stressors, in an industry that relies solely on in-person service, nail technicians faced the added challenge of being socially isolated from their peers.

The Nail Technicians' Network (NTN) wanted to provide a way for nail technicians to connect and share their life experiences during the pandemic. With the support from Parkdale Queen West staff, Chinese and South East Asian Legal Clinic and the Lighthouse, they organized a photovoice project, in which nail technicians could voice their feelings, concerns and thoughts through photos that reflected aspects of how the pandemic affected them.

In collaboration with the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD), the photovoice exhibit was held with much success August 31, 2021. OCAD's iconic architectural building and beautiful green spaces, together with the Toronto's skyline on the background, provided the perfect setup. In addition to photovoice displays, food and music, the event also featured the launch of the NTN's new pocket resource: "Responding to Anti-Asian Racism at Work: A Nail Technician's Guide".



"I couldn't work as a Nail Technician during the pandemic. I have a family and a son, so I have to work in a farm. The work is much harder, but I'm still happy because I learn more interesting things every day and find a solution for family finance."

- A Nail Technician's photovoice exhibit




Welcome speeches from the Nail Technicians' Network, Parkdale Queen West and OCAD staff and students provided the background and situational context for the exhibit.

The photovoice exhibit is a testament of nail technicians' strengths and resilience in facing the challenges from the pandemic. It is dedicated to all nail technicians and salon owners who have been doing their best in a difficult time.

Left: NTN members, Parkdale Queen West, OCAD and CSALC staff and students



HEATHER

 Life is A Test, I am Blessed
 I was Obsessed and Stressed
 Trying to figure everything out on my own
 Afraid to Ask for help, Afraid of being rejected
 I had to reach out Or Die
 ...I was Dying Physically, Emotionally and Spiritually
 The Drumming was Calling Me
 I feel it, I am 2-spirited
 My Spirit Animals are Real
 Shining Hawk, Listening Red Hummingbird Woman
 I was finally connecting to my Spirituality
 Being a Spiritual Journey not Religious
 I've come to realize
 Through help in the Anishinaabe Community...
 Community is Everything
 ...Being there for you in so many ways
 For this I am Thankful
 ...Being abused Used Confused and Reused
 Now I Choose
 Seen and Been Good Bad and Ugly.
 I have Choice
 ...Live Love Laugh Lots
 Cause Life is Precious


HIRAETH - PHOTOVOICE EXHIBIT AT PARKDALE QUEEN WEST-CONTINUED

In our Spring newsletter* we introduced the Hiraeth Photovoice Exhibit, a project that brings the faces and stories of community members and their experiences with substance use, with a focus on their strengths and resilience. The exhibit, which is supported by Global Shapers, continues to be featured at our Parkdale and Queen West sites.

Here are the portraits and excerpts from three of the people featured on the Exhibit. *For more about the exhibit and stories, follow the link below.

<https://pqwchc.org/wp-content/uploads/PQW-Newsletter-Spring-2021.pdf>

JOHN

 My story is hard to tell. My little sister and I were put in foster care when we were really young. We experienced a lot of violence and my parents drunk a lot. My foster parents were not much better. I don't really want to talk about it too much.

My mother and I have a better relationship now. We live together and I have my dog, Sandy. She is always with me and looking out for me. Sandy is pure love.


I have Crohn's disease and other issues. I need to take opiates for pain management. I don't want to be using them, but my disease is painful. Man, life is painful.

What gets me through? I love art... I dream about going back to school one day, maybe for art or graphic design.





JANICE

 **Where do I start? I have been working, I've been homeless. I have been a consumer and a provider. I have lived all over the place. I grew up in Scarborough but moved to Vancouver in the 90's. I moved back to Toronto in 1999 and returned to my job at Courage My Love. This was an incredible humbling experience... I spent time in the shelter system but eventually went back to school and started working in the field. It was difficult because the question was always the same, would the drugs rule my life, or would my life prevail?**

In the last 6 months, I have received the best health care that I ever received in my whole life. The medical system is listening to what I need. Safe supply is humane. I have never experienced this type of treatment before. It is nice to see progress. I think more drug users need to be listened to. We know what we want and need.

One day I would like to be able to take care of my parents. They are stubborn people, but I would love to give back.

JANICE passed away May 16, 2021 - She was a strong voice and advocate in harm reduction and anti-poverty work. Janice had recently started working at Parkdale Queen West CHC as Peer Worker in the Harm Reduction Program. Janice also gained notoriety during these COVID-19 times as an artist, creating sentiment cards, and featuring many of the eccentric and creative community members in Parkdale. She will be dearly missed.

CLIENTS' EXPERIENCES ACCESSING VIRTUAL SERVICES

We continue to ask clients about their experiences with the virtual services they access. We want to learn what works, what doesn't, and how we can improve virtual services at Parkdale Queen West.

The year's survey was facilitated by student Tasfia Choudhury, who collected data from 152 respondents through in-person and online surveying.

Here is a summary of what clients told us:



What clients liked **'BEST'**:

- Easily accessible, immediate care
- Reduced exposure to COVID-19
- Ability to do research and learn more about the topic virtually while interacting with healthcare provider
- More time to express all concerns to health provider

What clients liked **'LEAST'**:

- Virtual appointments can feel impersonal
- Not all clients know how to access virtual services
- Concerns about confidentiality, not sure if someone else may be hearing conversation with provider
- Concerns about phone appointments not being suitable for some health related issues such as skin problems, physical examinations

"I am very grateful for the services provided by Parkdale Queen West, and this year they were there for me when I needed them most."

- Survey participant

'TEENS GET COOKING' GOES VIRTUAL

COVID-19 social isolation restrictions for in-person programming over the past year didn't stop the Teens Get Cooking Program from offering young participants an opportunity to enhance their cooking skills, learn about how to make healthy food choices, and build on social connections— it simply moved its service delivery to a virtual platform.

For a program that functions primarily on an in-person basis, health promoter Rosa Ribeiro and clinical dietitian Tiffany Kress, found new ways to make it work. Prior to each session, they delivered the food ingredients to each of the participants' homes. They would then meet virtually once a week to learn to cook the dish of the day while talking about healthy eating and sharing international dishes. And it worked! A group of students from St. Mary's Catholic Academy in Parkdale participated in the six-week program in September this year.

Teens Get Cooking is offered to students in Parkdale at least once a year. Parkdale Queen West is grateful for the invaluable collaboration of the staff at St. Mary's Catholic Academy for reaching out to students who may benefit from the program.



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SERVICE UPDATE



MOBILE HEALTH CLINIC

In November 2021, the mobile health clinic held two cervical cancer screening events for the Hungarian-Roma community at the Parkdale site and will continue to provide ongoing cervical cancer screening events for specific populations throughout the year. However, individuals can request cervical cancer screening with their service provider at any time.

While still providing occasional COVID-19 testing and vaccine, the mobile health clinic transitioned toward its core function of providing harm reduction and primary care services for marginalized, homeless, or under-housed populations, offering regular stops at shelters and housing organizations.

Also, the mobile health clinic engages in Hepatitis C outreach every Monday from 2:00-4:00 pm at various locations.

Since the emergence of the Omicron variant and its highly infectious rate, the clinic responded to multiple requests for vaccination from community members and organizations, thereby holding vaccination clinics in shelters, rooming and boarding homes, supportive housing organizations, and homebound clients, while continuing weekly in-house vaccination clinics at our Queen West and Parkdale sites.

DONATIONS

Thank you to all donors who support the work of Parkdale Queen West CHC. Donations help us to continue cover costs and provide basic needs and health care supports to some of Toronto's most vulnerable community members.

To make a donation please follow the link below:

<https://pqwchc.org/donations/>



**PARKDALE
QUEEN WEST**
Community
Health Centre

