



PARKDALE QUEEN WEST

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE



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Parkdale Queen West Overdose Prevention Services Among the 15 Approved in Ontario

We are pleased to announce that our applications for the two consumption treatment services (Queen West and Parkdale sites) to provide overdose prevention supports were approved. This is a relief and great news for the clients we serve and whose lives are saved by having these services in place.

The approval is for one year, with a possibility for renewal on an annual basis to operate a model for Consumption and Treatment Services that includes overdose prevention and harm reduction services, along with a focus on connecting people to primary care, treatment, and social services, including housing and employment supports. (Continued on page 2)





A Note from the Executive Director

Welcome to the Summer 2019 edition of the Parkdale Queen West Newsletter. It's been just over two years since the voluntary merger of the Parkdale and Queen West Community Health Centres in April 2017.

We came together guided by a commitment to ensure that the success of our Centre's approach to health care is expanded to meet the care needs of the diverse communities we serve, many of whom face

significant barriers to quality health care services. Given the current political environment and what we have heard from the government about transformation of the health care system, we are more confident that the merger has positively positioned Parkdale Queen West to face the changes ahead. The goals of the merger continue to guide our work and I am pleased to report that we are delivering positively on those goals.
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Parkdale Queen West Overdose Prevention Sites (Continued)

The disappointing news is that, of the target of 21 sites to be approved, only 15 have been approved thus far and two Toronto sites, Street Health and St. Stephen's, were not approved. In the midst of this overdose crisis, to close existing services supporting very marginalized populations is extremely disappointing and the implications alarming.

We remain in solidarity with our partner sites who were not approved. We joined the Alliance for Healthier Communities in responding to this news, with a letter to Minister Elliot, urging the Ontario Government to ensure that every community in Ontario fighting the overdose crisis has access to evidence-based care that saves lives and connects people to health and social services.

While our sites were approved, we all remain vulnerable. Ongoing support for our partner agencies is vital to ensure that we continue providing these lifesaving services.

Thank you to everyone working in the service and support of the clients who use the services and for their advocacy efforts to ensure responding to the overdose crisis remains on the public health and government's agenda.

Parkdale Queen West Indigenous Wellness Program Featured in the Canadian Journal of Public Health

We are thrilled to share the news that an evaluation of our Niiwin Wendaanimak/Four Winds Wellness Program was selected for publication by the Canadian Journal of Public Health. The article highlights the strengths of the program's delivery model in promoting culturally relevant and inclusive services for Indigenous peoples.

In 2016, the Centre and a team of researchers at the Well Living House undertook an evaluation of the Niiwin Wendaanimak Program to assess the program's delivery model and approach to providing culturally relevant and sustainable supports for Indigenous people living in Toronto.

The results show that the Niiwin Wendaanimak Program "bridges teachings of inclusivity and the practice of harm reduction to create a non-judgmental space where community members' dignity and autonomy are respected". For a full article see: <https://pqwchc.org/program-evaluation-findings-for-niiwin-wendaanimak-program/>

Congratulations to the Niiwin Wendaanimak/Four Winds Team and community partners on this remarkable success!

“ I feel safe just coming here because there are other Native brothers and sisters. ”

- Niiwin Wendaanimak Program Group Member



A Note from the Executive Director (Continued)

The overdose and poisonous drug supply continues to have devastating impacts on the communities we serve in our harm reduction programs. We have seen numerous overdose related deaths and the Parkdale neighbourhood is ranked 10th among the areas of the city with the highest rates of overdose. Our goal is to respond to the overdose and toxic drug supply impacting residents in our community by providing the needed supervised consumption services. In doing so, we have heard from some in our community about health and safety concerns linked to drug use and discarded drug paraphernalia in public spaces. This has created some divisions and tensions between those needing this service, our Centre and some residents.

We have a keen interest in ensuring that the community is inclusive of all who need our services. To ensure that we meaningfully engage the community we will be convening a community advisory where we will bring local business, neighbourhood residents and community service representatives to discuss and problem-solve neighbourhood issues. The advisory will be a space to pro-actively discuss and identify responsive strategies to emerging issues, as well as identify opportunities and initiatives that can build stronger relationships and supports in both the Parkdale and Queen West neighbourhoods. If you are interested in supporting our efforts to build a stronger and inclusive community please do not hesitate to contact our community development and engagement staff lead at 416.537.2455 ext.1310.

All that we do would not be possible without the dedicated and committed staff team. They bring an unwavering commitment to the clients and communities and I take this opportunity to thank them and to thank you, our community, for your continued trust and belief in the value of the services Parkdale Queen West provides.

Angela Robertson

From Goals to Actions

Merger Goals

Clients from across both organizations will have access to a broad range of services through coordinated access to services across all of the programs

The new Centre will have the ability to share and leverage the shared expertise and capacity in both organizations and a larger foundation from which to build new services/ programs

The two organizations can enhance a Community of Practice, creating new services and opportunities for staff to learn new skill sets

The new Centre will provide stronger leadership in Primary Care Reform

The new Centre will have an increased ability to meet the challenges and respond to the opportunities in a transforming health care system while ensuring organizational sustainability

Highlights of Actions

- Since voluntary merger 2,382 new clients registered for primary health care services
- Expansion of harm reduction outreach services to local respite centres and new street outreach locations
- Delivery of Indigenous staff-led Niiwin Wendaanimak programs and Elder-led healing circle at the Parkdale site
- Expanded Diabetes Education programming accessible to clients across all sites

- Creation of life-saving overdose prevention services at both Parkdale and Queen West sites, preventing overdose fatalities by responding to over 115 overdose events
- Expansion of anonymous HIV Point of Care testing for vulnerable populations
- Centre becomes trustee and mentor for skills and capacity development project for Black LGBTQ+ young people in Toronto; and expanded its trusted support and mentorship program led by former youth in care to support Black young people in and transitioning out of the child welfare system

- Skills and knowledge sharing by Diabetes Education team at the Parkdale site with the Queen West site team towards enhancing Diabetes care to vulnerable individuals living in rooming houses and care homes in the community
- Centre's harm reduction staff a resource for the community in overdose prevention strategies

- Parkdale Queen West an active and leadership voice in the development of Neighbourhood Care Team and Ontario Health Team in the Mid-West

- Created a leadership structure that integrates primary health care, dental, mental health and harm reduction services under one director leadership to increase planning and collaboration across sites and teams and to support ease of access and coordinated services for clients

Building Capacity for Trans Health Care

With a growing need for comprehensive health care services for trans and gender-diverse communities, at Parkdale Queen West CHC we have increased training and capacity building for our health care providers. Earlier this year, **Rainbow Health Ontario** conducted a Trans Care training in house with our health care teams.

While many of our clinical staff are currently involved in the care of trans and gender-diverse clients, additional training and capacity building is key because transsexualism, transgenderism and gender non-conformity are not concepts explored routinely in traditional medical training. In addition, providing service for people who face barriers to healthcare and reducing those barriers is one of the priorities of our Strategic Plan for 2018-2020.



Seniors Theatre Project Makes Its Final Performance

After a year of training, rehearsals and performances, our “Wonderful, Organized, Wiser” (WOW) Seniors interactive theatre project ends with a golden note by performing at a Seniors Forum on March 7th as the event’s main feature.

Supported by **New Horizons**, in partnership with the **Branch Out Theatre Company**, the project aims to engage seniors in the community and to increase awareness of elder abuse, including financial abuse, through community theatre performances.

Through this project, a group of seniors was actively engaged in writing and performing a popular interactive theatre play focused on the mistreatment of seniors. This format allows audience members to interrupt the play when they witness something they think is wrong, and to work with the audience and actors to come up with alternative storylines.

Parkdale Queen West staff had the pleasure to view a dress rehearsal of their play prior to its launch in the community.



The Seniors Group has been performing their play throughout the city, to great acclaim. Congratulations to the Seniors Group on their tremendous success!

“My favorite part of being involved is to be able to contribute to the community, which makes me feel proud of myself.”

- WOW Seniors Participant

Traditional Healing Services Now at Parkdale Queen West

It's been long overdue! We are now working with Harry Snowboy, a traditional healer who will be working out of the Queen West site with the Niiwin Wendaanimak/Four Winds program. Harry Snowboy is a Medicine Man from the Cree Nation of Chisasibi in northern Quebec.

Traditional healing is a very important part of Indigenous health that is often overlooked by the health care system. Using a holistic approach to health, traditional healing involves health practices, knowledge and beliefs incorporating Indigenous healing and wellness while using herbal remedies, as well as specific ceremonies to promote spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing.

The Niiwin Wendaanimak program at our Queen West site is coordinated by Health Promoter Vivian Recollet, who collaborates with clinical providers in the care for Indigenous clients. Both teams from Queen West and Parkdale sites received training from Harry earlier this year.

Moving Towards Integrated Service Delivery

The Niiwin Wendaanimak program has had a great impact on participants and the Centre overall. The program has been offered primarily at the Queen West site. Recently, a number of sessions have been running at the Parkdale

location, and we are now moving toward a full program at both sites. As of April 2019, a new Indigenous Health Promoter position has been created. There will be weekly Circle at both locations, supported by all members of the Niiwin Wendaanimak team.



Clients and staff at annual Indigenous Residential Schools Survivor Legacy Celebrations at Nathan Phillips Square



'Early Years' Newsflash

In December 2018, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the **Community Action Program for Children**, a national community-based program launched in 1993 by the Public Health Agency of Canada. Our Early Years programs have a long history of supporting vulnerable families through weekly drop ins, material supports, and one-on-one staff engagement.

Currently, we are expanding the reach of programs at both sites and at our partner agency, **The Stop Community Food Centre**, through the implementation of our Infant Feeding Program. This program promotes breastfeeding and overall infant food security, particularly through the provision of Lactation Consultant support, breast pumps, and other supplies. This project is generously supported by the Sprott Foundation and is being evaluated in partnership with the University of Toronto.

Building Skills, Building Confidence

On the 23rd of April, our Building Skills-Peer Learning and Empowerment Program wrapped up the Winter/Spring session with a celebration lunch and two amazing group presentations!

Building Skills is a program for women to build on their self-esteem and confidence in a supportive group environment. The program is also a great opportunity for participants to learn from one another and to make new friends. Upon completion, participants work in groups to create and deliver group presentations on topics of their choice. In this session, participants delivered two outstanding presentations that focused on health and affordable recreational resources in Toronto. Congrats to the new graduates!



“ What I like about the program is that it tailors to the needs of everyone, and is very effective in building on group work skills. ”

- Building Skills Participant

Healthy Nail Salon Projects: Increasing Our Reach

The Nail Salon has two new projects underway:

- Exploring how to improve working conditions for salon workers
- Improving the reach of our health education resources through the translation of materials into Korean and dissemination in Korean-speaking nail salons.

In addition, staff are working with a Nail Technicians' Network to conduct a variety of skills development workshops for nail technicians. As always, nail technicians and peer workers inform this work.

10 Years Welcoming Newcomers

For the past 10 years, the Parkdale Newcomers Service Providers Network (PNSPN) has been working together to provide coordinated services for newcomers in Parkdale. On April 18, 2019 PNSPN celebrated its 10-year anniversary with special guests at our Parkdale site.

We appreciate the work that PNSPN members do in welcoming newcomers to the Parkdale neighbourhood. Congratulations to all!

PNSPN partners: Abrigo Centre, CultureLink, JobStart, Kababayan Multicultural Centre, Parkdale Community Information Centre, Parkdale Community Legal Services, Parkdale Intercultural Association, Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre, Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services, Vietnamese Association Toronto, West Neighbourhood House, Working Women Community Centre.



Health Promoter Rosa Ribeiro and Bhutla Karpoche, Member of Provincial Parliament for Parkdale-High Park

Harm Reduction Updates

The Supervised Consumption Service (SCS) at the Queen West site continues to see increases in clients using the service. Since we've opened, we have had almost 300 registered clients. From October 1st 2018 to February 13th 2019, the SCS had 979 client visits and staff responded to 10 overdoses.

The Parkdale site Overdose Prevention Service (OPS) is going strong! Since opening in November 2018, the OPS has had 402 visits and staff have responded to 11 overdoses.

Expanding Our Reach Through Outreach and Community Partnerships



We recently partnered with the **AIDS Committee of Toronto** to provide 10 months of in-house HIV testing and with the **Toronto South Detention Centre** to provide harm reduction and overdose prevention education to inmates and guards and with many different respites shelters and apartment buildings to provide supplies and education. At Parkdale Queen West, we have coordinated a number of trainings for partner agencies and peer workers to develop and share knowledge and skills throughout the sector.

Overdose Prevention Services



The Supervised Consumption Service is now participating in the **Health Canada Peer Assistance Pilot Project**. This project allows clients who are unable to self-inject to have another client or a community member prepare their drugs and provide injection assistance. Peer-to-peer assisted injection will allow us to reduce service barriers and injection related risks for a significant number of people who inject drugs but who cannot self inject.

Outreach Follow-up Peer Worker Project



We are excited to announce a partnership with **Street Health's Community Harm Reduction Response Team**. This initiative, developed by Street Health with funding from Health Canada's *Substance Use and Addictions Program*, involves the implementation of a 12-week training program with partner organizations to enhance their Harm Reduction activities.

Our *Outreach Follow-up Peer Workers* Program will support people who use substances and who do sex work and who face barriers to care. Peer Workers will offer health system and mental health system navigation, health advocacy, education, and guidance to health and community resources and services with a focus on Parkdale Queen West-based services.

KAPOW Celebrates 10-Year Anniversary!

On Friday March 8, 2019 K.A.P.O.W. (Knowledge and Power of Women) marked its ten-year anniversary, fittingly on International Women's Day!

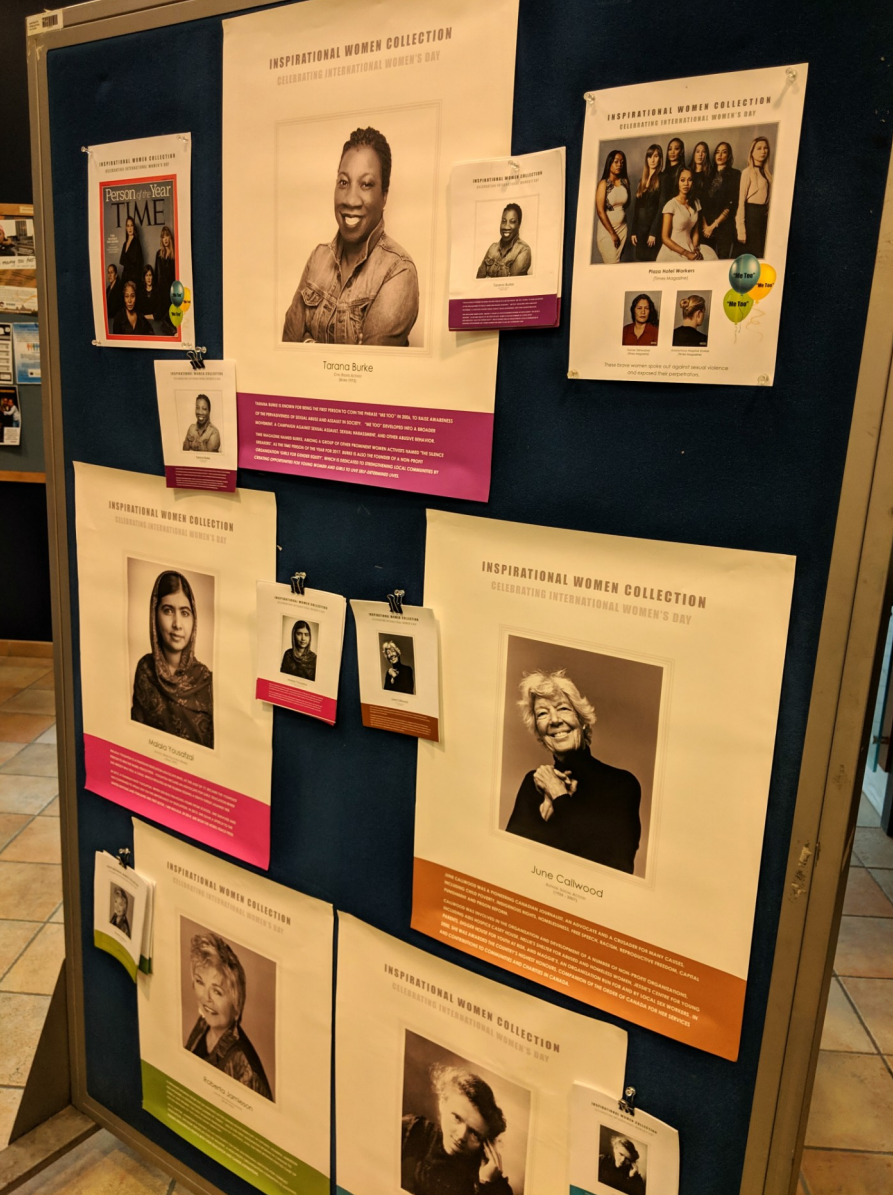
This special event celebrated the running of a weekly, harm reduction based drop-in for sex workers in Parkdale, and the many achievements of its strong and caring membership.

Parkdale Queen West CHC would especially like to acknowledge and thank the amazing women of **Sistering**, our partner agency for the past eight years, our community supporters, and local businesses **Good for Her**, **COME as you are**, and **Starbucks** for their generous donations.



“It's always a fun time, seeing the women, learning and sharing what we know.”

- KAPOW Group Member



Looking for Ways to Improve Access

The Parkdale site team is piloting an urgent access project which provides 15-minute same or next day appointment slots to clients needing urgent care for a single issue.

This strategy will be evaluated to measure the efficacy of access and quality improvement in health care at our Centre.

Improving Client Experience with New Phone System

We are pleased to report that we have implemented a new phone system which will allow us to enhance services for our clients and everyone that contacts the Centre. In addition, this system will improve communication between staff across all three sites; thus increasing our ability to respond promptly and efficiently. We have experienced some implementation challenges that have impacted callers. We regret any inconveniences caused.

Stayed tuned for:

PQW ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday September 24th, 2019

EXPLORING YOUR OPTIONS

Career and Training Forum for Women

Saturday October 5th, 2019

Follow us on



www.pqwchc.org

International Women's Day Celebration at Parkdale Queen West

On March 6th we celebrated International Women's Day with Indigenous drumming and singing, a keynote speaker, information booths, trivia, prizes and great food!

One of the highlights was an **Inspirational Women Poster Exhibit**, a poster collection of women who have made significant contributions to their communities and to the world in various capacities. The collection keeps growing each year with new Inspirational Women nominations which are submitted by clients and staff.

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