

Health in Your



Hands

The Newsletter of New Heights Community Health Centres

Breakfast with the Premier

Celebrating the successful first year of Pathways to Education™ in Lawrence Heights



By Owen Hinds

Two years ago, hope was running high that Pathways to Education would make a difference in Lawrence Heights. After all, it had years of success in Regent Park. So why not our neighbourhood and four others, where high school drop-out rates threatened individual successes and were a barrier to healthy communities? In 2007, New Heights became one of the first agencies to replicate this program. We started with 68 Grade 9 students. With a high-school drop-out rate of 43 per cent, many socio-economic challenges, and community members looking to change their prospects for the future, Lawrence Heights welcomed Pathways.

The Pathways team worked hard to administer the four supports: academic, social, financial, and advocacy. The meetings, conversations, and correspondence between Pathways Canada and New Heights seemed endless. Carolyn Acker, founder of the Pathways to Education program, insisted the program must succeed in all the new communities – so, everyone took up the Pathways cause, for the sake of the youth and families who allowed us into their lives.

Soon the data started rolling in. The school boards provided attendance and credit accumulation data. The researchers compared and evaluated: Pathways students vs. non-Pathways students.

The numbers showed that the Pathways model worked outside of Regent Park.



Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty chats with three Pathways students from Lawrence Heights. The premier was in the neighbourhood to announce the success of the first year of the Pathways to Education™ program in Lawrence Heights and four other communities.

Promoting our success

With the help of New Heights, Pathways Canada held a news conference to announce the results, right here in Lawrence Heights. On March 10, 2009, elected officials, funders, our Pathways students, the media, school board officials, community members, and staff from New Heights and Pathways Canada gathered at Sir Sandford Fleming Academy. Premier Dalton McGuinty delivered the year-one results and reiterated the government's commitment to the Pathways program.

Three of our Pathways students — Jameel Dawkins, Dainielle Distan, and Issa Mohamed — were selected for a private audience with Premier McGuinty. They had a chance to share their personal Pathways experiences with him. More than 20 Pathways students participated that day, acting as ushers and greeters, posing

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for pictures with the premier, and answering the media's questions. All the while they conducted themselves with dignity and decorum. They represented themselves, their school, their community, and Pathways with pride.

Crunching the numbers

All five of the new sites reported success after the first year of the program. Lawrence Heights reported a 52 per cent drop in the number of academically at-risk students, and substantially less absenteeism. Student enrolment for the next year increased by 162 per cent. At Sir Sandford Fleming Academy, 91 per cent of Grade 9 Pathways students earned six credits or more (compared to 80 per cent of non-Pathways students in the same grade). Exactly half of the school's Grade 9 and Grade 10 students are now involved with Pathways.

We are encouraged by the year-one results, but mindful of the work ahead of us. But this seems like heck of a good start towards empowering communities, one student at a time. 🍌

Save the Date...

...for our **annual general meeting** and **open house** event. Come and learn about our programs and services. Community members are encouraged to attend this event with family and friends.

Date: Monday, October 5, 2009

Time: 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Place: New Heights Community Health Centres – Lawrence Heights
12 Flemington Road, Toronto

Agenda and details to come. For more information please contact Ana Garcia by phone at 416-787-1676 ext 257 or by e-mail at agarcia@newheightshealth.org.

Become a Member...

...of New Heights Community Health Centres. It's one of the best ways to contribute to New Heights and our community. It's easy and you can make a big difference in our work!

There are benefits and privileges to membership. Members:

- vote at our annual general meeting
- participate in our community advisory panels (CAPs)
- receive regular updates about our programs and services
- connect with others in the community, and help to strengthen the community
- get a special members-only t-shirt

Membership is \$1 for one year. Sign up today! Get a membership form at the reception desk, or call Ana Garcia, 416-787-1676 ext 257.



Message from the Board Chair and the Executive Director

With summer comes an increased opportunity to spend time outdoors, engage in physical activity, eat healthy locally grown foods and spend time with family and friends. In addition to being enjoyable activities, these activities are also good for your health! At New Heights we want to support the achievement of health, both for individuals, and for the communities we serve. As you will see in this edition of Health in Your Hands, we are busy working in many different areas to help to realize this goal. Our staff, board and volunteers are working to make our existing programs better, and to create new and innovate programs and services that improve health. We do so in partnership with our members and community and we encourage involvement in the work that we do. We hope that you will consider membership, attend our annual general meeting, or volunteer in programs or on our community advisory panels. “Achieving Health Together” is not only our tagline, it’s the way we operate. Have a great summer and fall.

In health,



Andrea Cohen
Executive Director



Michael Rethazi
Board Chair



Health Promotion

New programs launching fall 2009

Travelling workshops

Our health promotion team is busy designing a series of travelling workshops. Through an outreach and promotion plan we will identify dates and locations across our catchment for these workshops.

The workshops will be designed to serve the broader catchment. Topics will include:

- mental health promotion and education
- harm reduction and hepatitis C information
- healthy active living
- chronic illnesses prevention, including diabetes education
- healthy relationships/self-esteem
- sexual health
- leadership training

Travelling workshops will launch in the fall of 2009. Please contact Jackie Clark at jackie@newheightshealth.org if you are interested in hosting a workshop in your building, school or community centre.

Second-floor resource area

The second-floor resource area is a vital space for community services and

resources. The health promotion team is considering how to staff it with volunteers, staff and site supervisors. The team will recruit and train volunteers on how to assist with the resource area. Watch for health themes and additional amenities that will supplement the coffee station, weekly Employment Café, and computer/Internet/printing services, all of which are accessible to community members during operating hours.

Seniors' Care Training Program

The team is conducting a needs assessment for a seniors' care training workshop series. It will use the same type of training model as the childcare providers training.

Childcare Provider's Training Program

In partnership with staff from Bathurst-Finch, the health promotion team will offer this program in the Bathurst-Finch neighbourhood starting fall 2009. Watch for more information about where and when this program will be held. 🌸

Becoming Leaders

New graduates of the CEACL program

By Judith Otto

On June 11, 2009, seven Lawrence Heights residents graduated from the **Community Education for Action and Community Leadership (CEACL)** program. These bright and energetic people are active participants and leaders in their community. The program started out with 12 people back in October 2008, but it was these seven who persevered and completed the intense training.

This program has run intermittently at New Heights since 1998. This time around the focus was on leadership skills that will help empower people around Revitalization, as well as broader leadership skills. Many tenants are concerned about access to information, equal participation in the decision making, displacement issues, and the shape and nature of a new Lawrence Heights. They want to have more of a voice; to advocate for their priorities and collaborate on official and community-based initiatives. Essentially, the CEACL program provided leadership training for people of all ages (youth to seniors) who were looking to become bigger stakeholders in the process of Revitalization.

The training involved a series of workshops on civic engagement, community development, facilitation, political engagement, community organizing, mobilizing principles, effective communication, racism, anti-oppression, media training, conflict resolution and transformation.

The training took place weekly from October 2008 through May 2009, in a 25-week program spread over three term sessions. The CEACL program also included a practice component, where participants worked in small groups on initiatives related to revitalization priorities and community development. The practicum allowed them to apply new approaches and skills, and to reflect on those experiences in some of the in-class sessions. The practicum consisted of 23 hours community time, in which the participants brought awareness to residents about the community room at 10 Old Meadow Lane and the Lawrence Heights Inter-organizational Network (LHION).

CEACL graduates receive a certificate of completion, an honourarium, and further employment opportunities.

The graduation ceremony was a beautiful reflection of the diverse graduates. The room was filled with cultural music, food and attire. It was a bit-bittersweet moment; the facilitators and participants were proud and happy to complete this journey together, but sad to see this phase end. They know they will cross paths again, because there is still much work to do and plenty to learn.



Graduates and family members of CEACL, an intense 25-week leadership training program.

At the graduation ceremony, guest speaker Owen Hinds recited the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, about loving and serving humanity:

Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. And all of the other shallow things will not matter. I won't have any money to leave behind. I won't have the fine and luxurious things of life to leave behind. But I just want to leave a committed life behind.

(Excerpt from "The Drum Major Instinct," Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)

A great quote; so fitting for these up-and-coming leaders. 🌸

GOOD NEWS

in Primary Health Care

We're always looking for new ways to improve community members' access to primary care. Now, thanks to some careful planning, New Heights Community Health Centres' nurses, doctors and nurse practitioners are accepting **30** new clients a month who do not have a doctor. Please call 416-787-1661 to arrange an appointment.

Aging at Home

Finding innovative ways to support the community is something we pride ourselves on. That includes supporting frail seniors (who are not followed by a physician or specialized geriatric service provider). We want to keep this group healthy and living independently!

New Heights proposed an Aging at Home initiative to the Toronto Central Local Health Integrated Network (LHIN). Our proposal was a success; we obtained funding for a joint program with the Toronto Central Community Care Access Centre and Baycrest Hospital. We are working with our partners and hospitals to develop the program, and expect to start accepting referrals in mid-July.

Watch for more information on when and how to make referrals.

From All Across Ontario

News

The 2009 AOHC Conference

By Paulos Gebreyesus

Every year, the Association of Ontario Health Centres (AOHC) organizes a conference for all its members. This year's title was, *At the Intersection of Poverty and Health: Where Everyone Matters*. All agreed this was a timely theme given the economic downturn in our province.

The conference offered over 50 different workshops. Topics covered a wide range relevant to staff and board members of community health centres (CHCs), Aboriginal health access centres, (AHACs) as well as community-governed family health teams.

Among the 600 delegates were a number of leaders in social justice and anti-poverty work, including: Pat Capponi from the 25-in-5 campaign; Deb Matthews, provincial minister for children and youth and provincial lead on the poverty reduction campaign; and Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff.

New Heights had the largest number of delegates from any one health centre: 28 staff and five board members. Our Pathways to Education team presented a workshop on the Pathways model that was very well attended. Andrea Cohen introduced this year's recipient of the Joe Leonard Memorial Award: Caroline Acker, founder of Pathways to Education. I also had the honour of introducing Deb Matthews and moderating an expert panel on Best Practices for Health Promotion and Poverty. The conference was a great way to finish my two-year term serving as a board-member of the AOHC Board.

The staff and board enjoyed the workshops, the gala dinner and the opportunity to network and meet colleagues from across the province. The conference was truly an inspirational and educational event. It energized the New Heights team to intensify our efforts in anti-poverty and building equitable and healthy communities. 🍷

Summer Fun

Health Tip

Summer is a fun time, packed with activities. It is also a time to be wary of preventable injuries and conditions. Health Canada provides tips on how to get the most out of the season.

Before you head for the beach, the park or even the backyard, take a few minutes to learn about sun safety — and other summer safety issues — and minimize your risk. You can protect your family and still have fun under the sun!

These **sun safety tips** apply to everyone regardless of age or ethnicity:

- Avoid needless exposure to the sun.
- Protect your eyes with UV-blocking sunglasses.
- Select shaded areas for outdoor activities.
- Wear a broad-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt, and long pants to protect your skin. Tuck a handkerchief under the back of your hat to prevent sunburn on your neck.
- If you can't cover up, use a sunscreen containing a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Verify it has both UVA and UVB protection, and re-apply every two hours and after sweating or swimming.
- Avoid using sun lamps.
- Some medication can make skin more sensitive to UV rays, consult your doctor if you have any questions.
- Don't let infants or children play or sleep in the sun in a playpen, carriage, stroller, etc.
- Get children used to wearing sunscreen. Pay special attention to the most exposed parts: lips, face, neck, shoulders, back, knees and tops of feet.
- You can use sunscreen and insect repellent at the same time. Apply the sunscreen first, followed by the insect repellent. Always follow the instructions on the package. 🍷

Taken from Health Canada's Health Promotion website.

For more information on other areas of summer safety, visit Health Canada's Health Promotion website at: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/securit/season-saison/summer-ete/index-eng.php>

Bathurst-Finch News and Views

By Julie Callaghan

In the midst of the continuing challenge to locate space for the development of a **satellite community health centre and community hub** in Bathurst-Finch, New Heights recently set about renovating its Lawrence Heights site to increase our capacity to serve clients from across our catchment.

We have started to assemble our new primary care team for the satellite, recently adding a full-time physician, Andrea Stern; a registered practical nurse, Tia Kiriakou; and a locum chiropodist, Rui Zhao. We hope to complete the team by year end, with plans to add a nurse practitioner, social worker, health promoter, and community health worker. Together with Jenny Lyttle, our community dietitian, the team will be supported by a new medical secretary, Iryna Kositsyna.

Action for Neighbourhood Change has continued to grow. Dedicated residents and staff took on an ambitious work plan for its second year. It was developed with community input, and reports the following successes:

- two more issues of *Bathurst-Finch Kaleidoscope*, and distribution of over 2,000 copies of each issue
- seven Quick Start projects, including children's, youth, adults', parents' and seniors' projects
- several well-attended community events, including International Women's



A self-defense demonstration was just a part of our International Women's Day celebrations. These — and other recent Action for Neighbourhood Change events — were very well attended.

en's Day celebrations, and a popular garage sale that raised funds for the Antibes Multicultural Festival and other causes

- new residents' groups, including an English conversation café, women's coffee-break group, men's square/fathers' group, and nannies and caregivers group

Our community animators continued to play significant roles in supporting this work. We were also pleased to receive a grant through the City of Toronto that enabled us to hire two community residents on one-year contracts: we hired Victoria Khardas as resident outreach worker and Oleg Morgunov as newspaper coordinator. Much

credit for our success goes also to the ANC staff of Oleksandra Budna, Julia Fursova and Hannah Bontogon, who have worked enthusiastically, thoughtfully, and tirelessly alongside residents. Finally, we extend special recognition to the many community members who freely gave their time and efforts in support of the above work and other activities too numerous to mention.

New Heights faces a variety of continuing and new challenges in Bathurst-Finch. This will be a transition time in the ANC project, as our funding from United Way is being reduced. So, we must quickly push forward toward a more resident-driven ANC. We are also anxious to secure temporary and permanent space for our satellite and hub. If we don't find it, we may need a radical change in our approach. Whatever happens, we are confident that the positive relationships we have developed with residents and service providers in the neighbourhood greatly help us contribute to the health and well-being of people living, working and studying in Bathurst-Finch. 🍷

Anyone interested in connecting to the work we are doing in Bathurst-Finch is welcome to contact the program director, Julie Callaghan, at jcallaghan@newheightshealth.org, or the administrative assistant, Oleksandra Budna, at obudna@newheightshealth.org.

Garbanzo Beans

A nutritional powerhouse

By Linda Staresinic

Garbanzo beans (also known as chickpeas) have a delicious, nut-like taste and buttery texture. These versatile beans are beige, black, green, red or brown. Whether they're dried or canned, enjoy them year-round.

Garbanzo beans are a good source of iron and folate. Combining them with a whole grain (such as whole wheat pasta or brown rice) makes for an inexpensive source of high-quality protein.

The beans are known to help lower cholesterol, and have a high fibre content. This prevents blood sugar levels from rising too rapidly after a meal, making these beans an especially good choice for someone with diabetes.

Five-minute hummus dip

- 1 19 fl oz (540 mL) can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- ½ lemon juice - squeezed
- 2 cloves garlic
- roasted red peppers and/or chili peppers to boost the spice (optional)

Place all ingredients into a food processor or blender. Add one tablespoon of water at a time and blend until desired consistency is achieved. Serve with whole wheat pita or veggies.

Other quick-serve ideas for garbanzo beans

- Add them to your green salads.
- Substitute them for ground beef in tomato sauce.
- Add them to vegetable soup.
- Roast them for a crunchy, delicious snack (drain and rinse a can of garbanzo beans; coat them with a little bit of olive oil and sprinkle with your favorite seasonings, spices or herbs; bake at 375° F for one hour; cool). 🍷

Information and recipe adapted from: www.pulsecanada.com.

Meet Daniel Rose

Daniel Rose is a Forever Young Seniors' Program participant and a volunteer at New Heights. Interview by Olu Akinkunmi.

Q: What inspires you to volunteer?

A: I take great pride when service providers deliver quality care to their clients. My role in assisting the clients is their assurance that, that can be accomplished.

Q: What motivates you to continue volunteering, despite all the highs and lows?

A: I have a good feeling in my heart when, at the end of the day, I see the fruits of my labor come to fulfillment.

Q: How does your volunteering contribute to community health?

A: When I do not know the answer, I know where to refer the clients so they can be well served by service providers.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add?

A: My volunteering and community roles are tools I use on a daily basis to ensure that the Lawrence Heights community functions with optimum efficiency. 🍷

Upcoming Holidays

New Heights Community Health Centres will be closed:

Civic Holiday	Monday, August 3, 2009
Labour Day	Monday, September 7, 2009
Thanksgiving	Monday, October 12, 2009
Centre Holiday	Monday, December 21, 2009
Christmas Day	Friday, December 25, 2009
New Year's Day	Friday, January 1, 2009

Diabetes: A Top Health Concern

More than two million Canadians now have diabetes. That number is expected to reach three million by 2010. About half of these people do not even recognize that they have diabetes.

Diabetes will lead to a number of serious complications if it is poorly managed. At the New Heights **Diabetes Education Centre (DEC)**, we are committed to improving the overall health of people with type 2 diabetes and pre-diabetes, through education and skill-building opportunities.

To make a change is not easy, let alone the one that lasts

The dietitians and nurses at the DEC support you to manage your blood sugar and make lifestyle changes that last. To do that, we provide:

- group classes
- one-on-one counselling
- cooking classes
- exercise programs, such as yoga

The response to our **yoga class** was overwhelming positive! So, starting in July we will offer a new fitness program: **Moving Strong**. This fitness class is designed to get your body moving and your heart rate up! It includes cardio dance moves, as well as strengthening and toning techniques that will help prevent injuries and make your daily activities easier. The class ends with stretching and relaxation, leaving you feeling recharged.

As we all know physical activity helps improve blood sugar and cholesterol in those with diabetes and pre-diabetes. Moving Strong is open to all community members trying to control high blood sugar caused by diabetes or pre-diabetes. Call Marta at 416-787-1661 ext 301 to discuss the class and book a free fitness assessment. 🍷

Want to know more about diabetes?

1. Visit your family physician and get tested today if you think that you may be at risk for developing diabetes.
2. Call us at 416-787-1661 ext 301 and speak with Marta for more information about our diabetes program.

Clients are raving about our diabetes programs:

"The class was so informative and interesting."

"Excellent teachers...Great visuals"

"I feel so much better after attending the yoga class."

"I truly enjoy it and love the fun."

"Yoga helps me breathe a lot better..."

It keeps me healthy and gives me energy."

"It's better when you exercise with other people...It's good to socialize –"

I like the group."

Calling All Community Members

Community

Advisory Panels

New Heights' community advisory panel (CAP) members work with the community to achieve our mission. We aim to involve the community and identify its needs. Then we give advice and feedback to New Heights' management and board of directors.

We are looking for community members who:

- have demonstrated leadership skills and a commitment to a healthy community
- look at community and health issues broadly
- live, work and/or go to school in our catchment or neighbourhood
- work or volunteer in agencies or businesses that serve our catchment, clients or neighbourhood

The CAPs meet at least quarterly (on a day and time agreeable to all members). 🍷

If you are interested in joining a CAP, please contact Ana Garcia at 416-787-1676 ext 257, or e-mail your letter of application to agarcia@newheightshealth.org.

BePART

Look out... The BePART Research Steering Committee is coming your way!



Our mission is to bring Lawrence Heights residents and organizations together in a working and learning environment. You may have seen our flyers or attended our workshops.

We started meeting in January 2009. We have held many discussions and participated in training – both at New Heights and at Ryerson University.

This fall, we will begin collecting information from neighbourhood groups. We want to know what different people have to say about neighborhood collaborations in Lawrence Heights. This important information will help us build a stronger neighbourhood voice. We would love for you to come out and join us! 🍷

Check out our web site (coming soon), www.bepart.ca, to stay informed about the progress of our project. For more information on our research or to get involved, contact Teisha Mullings, 416-787-1676 ext 238, or e-mail bepart@newheightshealth.org.

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Achieving Health Together