

WHAT'S INSIDE

Resilient Project Theatre

Message from the CEO
Spring 2021 - Pg 2

Scarborough Ontario Health
Team Approved - Pg 3

SCHC is Onsite at Testing
Clinics to Provide Education
- Pg 4

Covid Equity Action Project
- Pg 5

How We Made the Season
Bright - Pg 6

The Community's Drive to
Help One Another - Pg 7

Volunteer Zeinab Jama Gets
Full Time Position at SCHC
- BC

Editor: Debra McGonegal

SCHC Website Stories



Muheetha Ismath

Muheetha, a mother of four, came to Canada from Sri Lanka 10 years ago...

[Read more](#)

Every month SCHC adds a story from our clients, volunteers or staff members.

Resilient Project Theatre

DEBBIE LEE, SENIORS HEALTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Mixed Company Theatre (MCT) and Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities (SCHC) have partnered on "The Resilient Seniors' Theatre Project" - a collaborative artistic initiative designed to build physical and mental resilience among seniors during this era of social distancing. The project provides a platform for seniors to access social engagement opportunities, learn how to use technology to remain connected virtually, and find new strategies to cope with the mental health challenges they are experiencing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project is based on a tried and tested online theatre programming model developed by MCT since March 2020. MCT is a pioneer in Canada of the use and practice of "Forum Theatre," a UNESCO-recognized tool for community learning. In a typical Forum Theatre presentation, a challenging situation is depicted in the first half of the play, resulting in an unhappy ending, but it doesn't end there! Audiences

then get the chance to suggest ways to improve the situation or even get up on the (virtual) stage to try out their potential solutions. Will these new strategies lead to a better ending for the story?

Participants of this project will be guided by experienced MCT facilitators in interactive games to discover the social and mental health challenges they are most interested in exploring. They will work together to create a script which turns their individual experiences into one universal story that reflects those themes. Our facilitators will support the group as they rehearse and perform this collective story before a larger audience, in the Forum Theatre format.

This project is funded by the Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility through their "Seniors Community Grant Program". For more information, please contact Debbie Lee, Seniors Health program coordinator @ dlee@schcontario.ca

Message from the CEO Spring 2021



CEO Jeanie (Joaquin)
Argiropoulos, MHS, CHE

So many of us entered 2021 with a sigh of relief that 2020 was over, a sense of excitement at the reality of vaccines to address COVID 19 and then, with the second lockdown, a bit of disappointment and frustration at the realization that we still have many months to go.

So I want to take a moment

to reflect on the resiliency of the Scarborough communities, the dedication of our SCHC staff and volunteers and the strength of partnership and collaboration that continues to champion our work in 2021. It continues to be my pleasure to lead a team that ensures being there for our community is their priority. That is relentless in ensuring we had the safest environment for our staff and clients. That pivots and innovates to find virtual modalities to continue to support when in person services were not possible. These are our frontline heroes.

To our community that responds in kind. That trusts us with your safety. That responds to our innovation and adopts the technology in support of staying connected. That stands patiently and safely as you wait to access the Food Bank. That listens when we

share how to stay safe and why to get tested. That lets us know what is important to you during these difficult time. You are the reason SCHC is here, why we do what we do.

To our partners, now formalized in the Scarborough Ontario Health Team (OHT), together we are stronger. Together we have achieved goals we never thought possible. Together we will have an even greater impact on the health and well-being of all of Scarborough residents, especially for those who have historically faced barriers, whose voices have been silenced and the social determinants of health a luxury not a right. Together we will see greater health equity for our communities.

All this for me to say thank you to our staff, community and partners for helping me maintain the sense of excitement that 2021 promises. We may have a long road ahead of us still, but together the journey is inspirational.

About Us

Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities (SCHC) is one of the most established and comprehensive community health organizations in the province. The organization owes its beginnings in 1977 to thirteen community agencies, a core group of community leaders and countless volunteers who identified emerging health and social needs within Scarborough. We work with over 550 volunteers and 200 staff to offer 38 distinct and integrated services across 11 sites. In order to remain a client-centred, integrated, engaged and proactive organization, we have continued to work closely with our community members and foster partnerships that address pressing needs, setting new standards of excellence in community health.

Mission Statement

SCHC is dedicated to meeting the diverse, holistic health needs of the communities of Scarborough by addressing the physical, mental, social, financial and environmental aspects of their health. Through the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the delivery of a comprehensive range of culturally competent health and social services, we cultivate vital and connected communities.

Vision Statement

To be recognized by our clients, communities and partners as leaders in championing holistic health and wellness for the diverse populations of Scarborough.

We're On Social Media



@SCHCOnT



SCHCONT



@SCHCOnTario

Scarborough Ontario Health Team Approved

DEBRA MCGONEGAL, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT

On Wednesday, November 18th the Honourable Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health announced the Scarborough Ontario Health Team as one of the new teams in the province to implement a one-team approach to help keep clients, patients and families in our communities healthy and well.

“This is an important step on our journey together to provide collaborative, high-quality health and community services for the people of Scarborough and beyond. Today’s investment will not only help our province respond more effectively to the current global pandemic, but it will also help us end hallway

healthcare and build a better, patient-focused health care system for the future,” said Premier Ford.

Through an Ontario Health Team, patients will experience easier transitions from one provider to another, including, for example, between hospitals, home care providers or long-term care homes, with one patient story, one patient record and one care plan. As Ontario Health Teams are established, patients and families will also have access to 24/7 navigation and care coordination services.

Scarborough Ontario Health Team (SOHT) is a network of over thirty partner organizations with a history of collaboration providing health and community services across the continuum of care for the diverse community of patients and families in Scarborough. SOHT is working together with the Scarborough Family Practice Network of primary care physicians and includes a Client and Family Advisory Committee to help co-design practical solutions to providing care.

“SCHC is proud to be one of the leading partners in the SOHT. This collaboration will greatly benefit our diverse community”, said Jeanie Argiopolis, CEO of SCHC.

“

For me, Tamil Heritage Month is a reminder to reflect on our past, present, and future. Our history grounds us.

It allows us to appreciate how far we’ve come, and how much we contribute to our communities today. As a displaced people, our heritage teaches me to carry on, to honour our past, to stand in solidarity with oppressed peoples, and to be a better community member.

Gnanushan Krishnapillai
Children & Youth Health Program Facilitator



TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH
தமிழ் பாரம்பரியம் மாதம்



“

It's so fulfilling to see the comfort and appreciation from seniors when they leave the office after speaking with someone who is Tamil. The Tamil community in health care is growing, and I am proud to be part of it.

Working in a predominantly South-Asian community with so many Tamil elders it's important they don't feel alienated when needing help, especially for health concerns/procedures. I am so proud to be part of SCHC to help so many clients. It's an honour to help remove barriers by using my mother tongue for the Tamil community who don't seem to be represented enough in health care organizations.

Sarulatha Srikanapathy
Administrative Assistant, Diabetes Program



TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH
தமிழ் பாரம்பரியம் மாதம்



January is Tamil Heritage month and SCHC wants to recognize how our Tamil staff support the Tamil community in Scarborough.

SCHC is Onsite at Testing Clinics to Provide Education

CRYSTAL CHISOM NWAKPADOLU-MORIN AND AMANDRA BAGRI, HEALTH PROMOTION SPECIALISTS



Amanda Bagri, Health Promotion Worker at a Covid testing site.

The impact of this pandemic goes beyond the symptoms and severity of the illness itself. Social determinants (such as food security, income, housing, etc.) have shown considerable effects on COVID-19 outcomes in the Scarborough community hence the need to incorporate a wrap-around support model.

SCHC in collaboration with other Scarborough-Ontario Health Teams (S-OHT) partners are responding to emerging needs

and the negative impacts of the pandemic in Scarborough by bridging the gap.

As SCHC health promoters, we help our clients increase control over their health and to improve their health even during this pandemic. At the testing sites, we educate, connect clients to resources, and respond to any COVID-19 related questions they may have. These pop-ups provide testing in a more accessible manner such that people do not

need to register online or over the phone prior, and proximity to their homes or workplaces. This experience is a great way to connect with community members who are eager to educate themselves about COVID-19 and ways they can stay healthy and happy.

Each interaction with the clients at these pop-ups has shown how willing community members are to learn more and do their part to help minimize the impact of COVID-19. From car-pooling with their workmates to get tested together to taking some extra health promotion materials for their friends and family at home, the Scarborough community is doing their best to fight this pandemic. For instance, a client was disappointed she was not aware of the Voluntary Isolation Centres (VICs) when she needed to isolate herself from her roommates for three days, costing her about \$600 to stay in a hotel. Stories like this motivate us to make sure people are aware of how to access these resources. For more “accurate” info and updates on Covid-19 go to

www.schcontario.ca/covid-19support



One of our ads on the back of a TTC bus.

Covid Equity Action Project

LYNN MUIR-WHEELER, DIRECTOR COMMUNITY HEALTH TEAMS

The COVID Equity Action Project (COVID EAP) for south Scarborough is in partnership with City of Toronto and Ontario Health High Priority Community Strategy.

Our goals are to share public health information, improve access to COVID-19 testing, and provide critical supports to individuals who test positive. This integrated set of Targeted COVID-19 Equity Measures includes:

- (1) Measures to Expand Testing Sites
 - Increase mobile testing
 - Increase transportation to testing sites
 - Increase the number of testing sites
 - Extend testing site hours
- (2) Measures to support Community Education and Engagement
 - Targeted outreach, case management, and supports
 - Equip residents with masks
 - Add “family approach” to voluntary isolation sites
- (3) Measures to address the Threat of Eviction and Improve Access to Emergency Assistance (income support).
 - Advocate for residential eviction prevention
 - Advocate for income supports
 - Advocate for newcomer access to COVID-19 services and supports

(4) Immunization measures in the near future

- Leverage Targeted Equity Measures to implement the City’s immunization strategy (in development through the EOC)

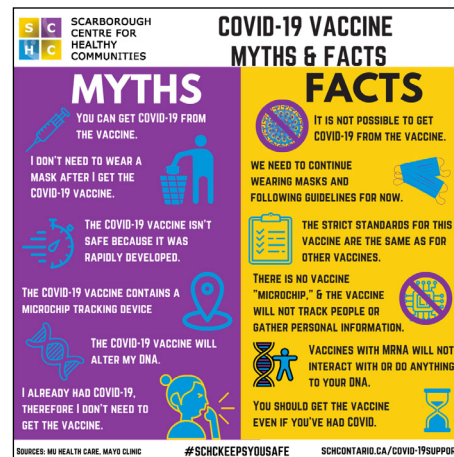
Our Outreach Workers will be in the community targeting communities with the highest rates of COVID-19 positive cases to disseminate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), information about how to stay safe, testing sites and isolation centres, and engage community influencers to amplify the key prevention messages.

Our Case Managers will receive referrals for clients and families who have tested positive for COVID-19 and provide wraparound services to keep them supported during their isolation period. Those services may include: food, mental health support, PPE, financial support, information and referral to isolation centres, virtual childcare, and regular check-ins.

For further information regarding the COVID Equity Action Project or make a referral please contact us at:

Local number: (416) 736-9372
or Toll Free: 1- 888-834-8776

Email: covidequity@schcontario.ca



SCHC was selected as the service organization to deliver community outreach through funding provided in the Covid-19 Health Equity Action Project by the City of Toronto and Provincial Health Ministry for South Scarborough. People can self refer to be supported if they are tested positive for Covid and/or suspect they have Covid. Please share this so more Scarborough residents can benefit from the project's services and we can all help prevent the spread of the virus. See [CONTACT US](#) for the ways you can reach a case worker or community support worker.



In addition to our COVID Equity Action plan and assessment centres, we have been producing and sharing informational content on our social media including the myths vs facts poster you see on the left. To view more posters search by “#SCHCKeepsYouSafe” or visit www.schcontario.ca/covid-19support

How We Made the Season Bright

JENNIFER BOTELHO, COORDINATOR EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRE AND SHIVANA SANKAR, MANAGER, COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES



Children loved making the gingerbread house.

This past holiday season looked very different for many of us. Family gatherings were frowned upon and many closures affected the holiday cheer that tends to shine within. Our EarlyON couldn't host our traditional party in the building that attracts approximately 70 children and their caregivers. This wouldn't stop our team! Not only did we provide toys to 77 children for an outdoor pick-up by screened booked appointments, we were also able to distribute approximately \$2500 worth in grocery gift cards, child/adult hand-stitched cloth masks, gingerbread houses, cookie decorating kits, hot chocolate, candy canes, age-appropriate books, craft activity kits and more! We want to share a shout out and many thanks to a Children's Book Bank for delivering approximately 700 books, No Frills at Kingston/Morningside, Joanne Kidd who made cloth masks by hand and all donors & donations that made it possible to provide grocery cards to 38 families. Together we made the season and year brighter for the community and families.

The SCHC Food Bank & Wishes for the Holidays supported over 400 families through sponsorships of a special package including a grocery gift card for a family holiday dinner, toys for the children under 14 and gift cards for youth 14 to 18. All those that requested sponsorship were supported by the SCHC Christmas angel's – Peerage Capital and many others (Crown, ThermoFisher, Soley Chiropractic – to name a few)

Many other families visited the Food Bank to receive the same as above – but instead of the grocery card – they got a turkey/or meat option, boxed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, cranberry sauce, pancake mix, syrup, cake mix, icing, and hot chocolate mix.

Thank you to the SCHC community who have responded to the increased need resulting from the pandemic. Your donations enabled us to continue this program AND keep the food market open from the first lockdown to now. Program set up was changed to adhere to Public Health guidelines and our internal infection, prevention and control

procedures, but we haven't skipped one day of providing food to those experiencing poverty and food insecurity.

If you want to help, please go to <https://www.schcontario.ca/donate-now.html>



The Community's Drive to Help One Another

SHIVANI SRITHARAN & LAXSANAA SIVANANTHAN, MEMBERS OF SCARBOROUGH SAI CENTRE



Being local youth, we know food insecurity is a crucial issue at any time, but particularly during the pandemic. Through social media, we came to know of the breadth of services SCHC offered, especially for those with food insecurity. We love all the sessions, and virtual seminars SCHC offers as it has many good initiatives and community engagement.

We were privileged to enjoy the holidays with friends and families (observing covid protocols of

course) and we were eager to find opportunities to be a part of another family or community experiencing the same joy. With everything going on, it is nice to find the positive aspects that come when we support each other. The pandemic definitely put a damper on 2020. We wanted to provide ingredients that could be used to create memories in the kitchen.

We decided to do a drive thru donation drop off to collect items for SCHC's food bank. We spread the message on social media, mobilized our youth at our local community organization, and were able to host a great drive with the generous support of our family, friends, and community. We had people drive from the west end of Toronto just to support our drive.

As health care professionals ourselves, we felt the need to help SCHC do what it does best! We look forward to doing more projects and community initiatives on behalf of SCHC and Wishes for the Holidays. Despite the toll the pandemic may have had on us, our community is still eager to support one another during this what has been the toughest year yet on us personally and collectively. It really proved we are all in this together!



Volunteer Zeinab Jama Gets Full Time Position at SCHC

ZEINAB JAMA, CLIENT INTAKE ASSISTANT

I was a single parent, raising a daughter on my own. I had no skills and had been out of the job market for 10 years. I was referred to SCHC's volunteer department by RNC Employment Services, where I had been taking classes. They encouraged me to become a volunteer in order to use my new skills and gain job experience. I started by providing administrative assistance for the Diabetes Clinic, then the Finance Department. A staff member encouraged me to apply for the Client Intake Assistant position and I beyond excited when told that the job was mine. Words could not express how happy I was.

I'm now optimistic about my future. The difference between a year ago and now is so big. I just feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders. I have new abilities, a new network of people and looking at my life from a year ago, my life feels so much better. I have HOPE.

My advice to my former self and anyone else, would be to go out there and look for what you want. If you don't have the skills you need right now, find out how to get them and go get them. Believe in yourself and have the confidence to go get it.



Zeinab is happy and confident now that she is employed at SCHC