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Editor: Debra McGonegal

SCHC Website Stories



Clarine Taylor

Clarine is a client of the Active Living Centre, she comes in daily to exercise, play bingo and share lunch...[Read more](#)

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

Notes of Hope

BY LORI BEESLEY, COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



Frozen "Meals on Wheels" bags ready to go with heartfelt Notes.

March 17 volunteer services were suspended due to COVID-19 public health safety recommendations. The impact of not having the amazing SCHC volunteers and their help was felt immediately in many programs.

SCHC volunteers were still concerned about their clients and needed to feel connected, so Notes of HOPE was initiated. The goal was to have volunteers craft personal notes to provide some hope to the clients and lift their spirits. HOPE stands for:

H = Happiness, O = Optimism, P = Purpose, E = Encouragement and Notes of HOPE was born.

One Note of HOPE is attached to each Meals on Wheels delivery and one to each bag of food given out at the Food Bank. Other program areas jumped onboard to spread the volunteer love into the community.

Over 75 personal and heartfelt Notes were written by volunteers and the reaction from our clients has been very gratifying.

One client told me the Notes are wonderful and he looks forward to receiving them every week with his bag of meals. Another stated that the four words that make up HOPE are so positive and she is really enjoying how everyone is coming together

to support one another at this time. Another client had tears in her eyes as she received the Meals on Wheels bags with the Note, saying she is overwhelmed by the kindness of the volunteers.



"The notes are very encouraging and I love reading them every week".
Peter



Pat is grateful for the notes and finds them lovely and uplifting.

Thank you to all of our volunteers who took the time to write a Note of HOPE. You will never know the true impact it has made and will continue to make in the lives of the many, many clients who receive them. By so generously sharing your hearts with others, you have helped encourage others to stay positive and strong. We can never thank you enough.

Message from the CEO May 2020



CEO Jeanie Joaquin.

Spring for us at SCHC normally means the start of a new year. Well this year SCHC, and the world, have redefined what normal means. As the world is addressing a global pandemic, we at SCHC have remained committed to making sure we stay strong and healthy to

support our community. We know that Scarborough residents face more barriers to health and well-being than other parts of the city, the province and hence our mission, “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”, is even more critical during our fight with COVID-19.

Therefore, not surprising, our staff rose to the challenge and re-imagined how to stay connected with our clients, our community. While many of us have had to work from home to adhere to public health and the province’s guidelines, others have continued to come in to work to ensure critical services like the food bank, Meals on Wheels, transportation services, PSW supports, harm reduction and clinical services that require in person visits are provided. The rest of the staff have been working hard to provide virtual programming.

Examples include one to one counselling services to support individuals dealing with caregiver stress, grieving, abuse, isolation, and pandemic coping; seniors zoom classes, wellness and safety checks and online programming for children and youth.

While we miss seeing our staff, our volunteers and our clients, I am so proud of the work the SCHC family does. While they themselves are dealing with the same uncertainty and stress that our community is, they remain committed to staying connected with our community, so to our staff a special thank you for all you are doing!

SCHC remains open and active. As we take our lead from authorities we have started planning to be able to welcome our clients, safely, back to our locations. But, in the meantime, there are many ways to access SCHC programs and services, to learn more visit us at www.schcontario.ca or on Facebook @ScarboroughCentreforHealthyCommunities, Instagram@SCHCOntario and Twitter @SCHCCont.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we all navigate these changing times together!



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.

We're On Social Media



@SCHCCont



SCHCCont



@SCHCOntario

National Volunteer Appreciation Week 2020

LORI BEESLEY, COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



Staff video for SCHC volunteers at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeKODfBCOz8>

This year we celebrated National Volunteer Appreciation Week in a way we never have before - virtually! The week of April 19th was celebrated across Canada with the theme "It's Time to Applaud Canada's Volunteers". Due to the pandemic, we were able to applaud the volunteers of SCHC in new and creative ways.

entitled: Self-Care for Superheroes. Day Three, a short video was shared where SCHC staff members supplied quotes on what having their help meant to them. Day Four, Notes of Hope was posted on our SCHC Blog letting volunteers know the impact of Notes of HOPE on

Day One: Volunteers received a well-deserved virtual volunteer badge to proudly "pin it" to their social media pages. Day Two volunteers were invited to a webinar hosted by Volunteer Toronto

our clients and the Scarborough Community. Day Five: The grand finale – an SCHC home-made volunteer appreciation video! Go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeKODfBCOz8> to see staff express their gratitude for the amazing SCHC volunteers, and how much they were being missed during this time.

Although the official National Volunteer Appreciation week ended, please know that our deep gratitude and admiration is ongoing. SCHC is thankful for our volunteers all year long!



Proud to be
an SCHC
Volunteer
Badge.

Harm Reduction Saves Lives

BY AYZHA MACLEAN, HARM REDUCTION WORKER, INTERPROFESSIONAL PRIMARY CARE TEAM

As a response to this life changing pandemic, we see people adjusting their behaviours, businesses accommodating contactless sales and even our government providing financial support. These are all examples of harm reduction; methods in which negative consequences are minimized and which support a healthier community by promoting optimal health and social inclusion.

The Harm Reduction Workers (HRW) at SCHC have been pushing through COVID-19 with

our new "Mobile Harm Reduction Bus"; achieving meaningful connections while providing individuals with harm reduction supplies, water, snacks and connections to resources.

"I've always seen myself as an alcoholic, but you've helped me to see I am a man with a problem that I can fix." – SCHC Harm Reduction Client

The reality is that, without harm reduction, people would still use substances but in unsafe and unsupported ways. This often leads to poorer health outcomes

and possibly overdose and/or death. As such, harm reduction encourages safety, reduces illness and injury and maintains or improves the health status of the people using the substances.

Wherever the decisions take our clients on their journey – we will be there, with no hesitation nor judgment!

"I trust you because I know you care" – SCHC Harm Reduction Client. Read more at <https://www.schcOntario.ca/blog/harm-reduction-saves-lives>

Not all Superheroes Wear Capes

DEBRA MCGONEGAL, FUND AND VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT MANAGER



SCHC Assisted Living staff are superheroes caring for isolated seniors in a challenging environment.

SCHC front line workers continue to provide for the most vulnerable in our community, while still adhering to Public Health Covid-19 regulations. One group of SCHC heroes provides care to isolated seniors in two Toronto Community Housing buildings in Scarborough. The Assisted Living Team aren't donning capes during this health crisis, but gloves and masks to make sure those seniors continue to get the services they need. Whether that be cooking a meal, disinfecting their homes, ensuring they have their medications or simply being that friendly face and voice to reassure them they are not alone. "This is such a dedicated group of personal support workers. They all understand how their role is even more critical during this time. Despite this challenging environment and additional responsibility because of Covid-19, most of them couldn't

imagine not continuing to provide care", states Christine Hewitt, Manager of Community Supports.

SCHC Assisted Living staff are superheroes caring for

isolated seniors in a challenging environment.

When the pandemic was declared, a group of very concerned seniors at Scarborough



Analya, SCHC Assisted Living staff member, delivers Love-in-a-Box to a client.



SSR residents donned masks and gloves to assemble Love-in-a-Box for isolated seniors in their community.

Retirement Residence (SSR) wanted to help. Together with the recreation staff and their leadership, they all agreed on creating the Love-in-a-Box initiative.

Marie-Josée Lafountain, Principal and Acting Executive Director of SSR commented that, "Love-in-a-Box gave the residents a great

sense of purpose. They all joined in on fundraising, purchasing of items like puzzles, games, food, personal products and carefully putting together their box of love. They loved doing this!"

Greg Kerr from Koch Management Group delivered the completed boxes to the SCHC staff. "SSR, led by Josee, is a retirement

home chock full of caring and compassionate people so we were honoured to play a small part in extending their hearts to those in need". Partnerships in projects like this demonstrate the power of community coming together.

Residents were thrilled with their boxes and sent hand written thank you cards in return. Certainly this health crisis is bringing more awareness to the super powers of people who care for their community.



SCHC Mood Walkers take different pictures each week on their daily walks.



The need for food amongst the vulnerable residents in Scarborough is greater than ever. Please help at www.schcontario.ca/donate-now.html

Tamil Heritage Month

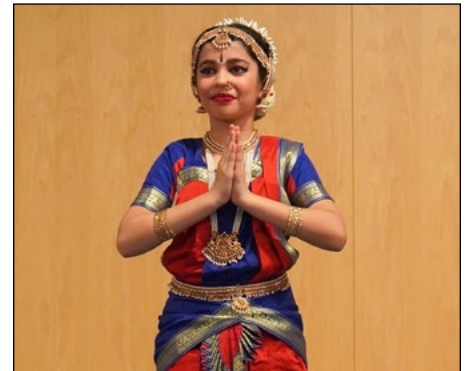
DILANI BALASUBRAMANIAM- YOUTH OUTREACH WORKER



Audience members participate in a saree tying competition with their models while the audience cheers on to select winners

On January 31, SCHC celebrated our second annual Tamil Heritage Month event, a national day to celebrate the achievements, contributions and rich culture of Tamil Canadians. It was a beautiful occasion which had transformed our Hub into a colourful delight, wrapped in

sequin sarees, jasmine flowers and paintings by community artist Keera Ratnam. Attendees who varied across all age groups and from various community organizations were welcomed and hosted by our amazing youth group - MSYL. Our emcees, Janu and Anjana narrated the evening, educating us on the history



Divisha performs classical South Indian dance, Bharathanatyam

of the Tamil people, including the genocide in Sri Lanka, and significant Tamil leaders. We also had beautiful dance, vocal and saxophone performances, a photo booth, lots of prizes, games, golden candle holders as gifts and delicious Tamil food catered by a local Thai restaurant.

Plan, Shop, Eat Well during the Pandemic

RUCHIKA WADHWA, DIABETES DIETITIAN

During these unprecedented times of the pandemic, it makes sense to stock up on budget-friendly, non-perishable food items so that you don't need to go shopping if you are unwell and minimize the risk of exposure to infection.

First, take an inventory of what's in your cabinets, fridge and freezer. This will help you plan your shopping list. It is better to gradually build up on your household stores by adding a few extra items to your grocery cart everytime you shop.

Some tips and advice to follow when doing groceries:

1. Shop the perimeter, the healthiest options are all around the perimeter.

2. Got a few minutes? Browse the produce section more than you normally would, spend time looking at produce and buy the unbruised ones. Browse the produce section to carefully select unbruised ones.

3. Buy fresh produce in varying degrees of ripeness to allow for some ripening towards the end of the week.

4. Don't shop when you're hungry and always carry a list when you shop. You'll be more likely to stick to your budget and nutritious food choices.

5. If you're cooking that day, try buying manager's special items or

"unattractive" produce. They may be reduced for quick sale but still make a great addition to soups and stews.

6. Use store flyers to help you find specials.

Non-perishable foods that are a good option include:

- Dried or canned beans and lentils (like chickpeas, kidney beans and lentils)
- Peanut butter, canned tuna, liquid egg whites
- Frozen vegetables and fruits
- Canned tomatoes : crushed, diced
- Dried pasta , rice
- Evaporated milk
- Unsalted nuts

If resources to buy food are a challenge, there are community supports available. Go to www.schcontario.ca/blog to read more. Call SCHC at 416-642-9445 to book an appointment with a dietitian.

Black History Month

EMINEJOMO IKPONMWEN – PROGRAM ASSISTANT

The hub's black history month celebration which was held on February 28th, 2020 from 5-8pm was a celebration of diversity, colors, dancing, music and uniqueness. About 70 people attended. This year's theme was Mental Health Amongst Black People. Staff from the Inter Professional Primary Care Team and a youth worker from the Youth Team gave a brief talk on mental health and how it affects black people. There was a table set up for the available resources.

The homework club kids gave a brief presentation on famous black inventors and how their inventions have helped the human race through generations. There was a head wrap workshop and after the workshop a friendly

competition was held among the residents for the best head wrap.

SCHC staff member Omar Brooks and his son gave a drum performance that had the Hub manager demonstrating some unique Nigerian dance moves while the crowd watched and clapped along. In between performances, some Nigerian finger foods; puff-puff and buns were served.

After enjoying an array of Afro-Caribbean meals; jerk turkey, macaroni pie, pilaf, cole slaw and jollof rice, everyone got up and danced. A young local artist, DJ Love Jones, performed great dancing raps and had residents and community staff dancing to her beats to finish off the evening.



Omar Brooks and his son Isaiah performing with African drums to kick off the event

Experiencing Domestic Violence? We are Here to Help!

AMY AU, REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKER

While millions of Canadians stay home to keep safe and help flatten the curve of the pandemic, many victims of domestic violence found their home to be more dangerous than ever. Many experience a greater threat as they are confined to their homes with their abusers. SCHC is here to help.

Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship. Behaviors can include the use of physical and sexual violence, threats and intimidation, emotional abuse and economic deprivation.

For signs of an abusive relationship and the feelings it causes please read our blog at: <https://www.schcontario.ca/blog/experiencing-domestic-violence-we-are-here-to-help>

If you are in immediate DANGER or fear for your safety, please CALL 911.

Many services are available to everyone in the GTA, including counseling, shelters, financial help, legal assistance, etc. For women, you can call the Assaulted Women's Helpline (416-863-0511) which offers a 24-hour crisis line. If you are a man, call the Canadian Centre for Men and Families, at 647-479-9611.

SCHC is also here for you, right in Scarborough. Our experienced counselors in the Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Care Centre, Inter-professional Primary Care Team and Community Health Centre are able to provide support and counseling, offer options and help you navigate through the services. Call us at 416-642-9445. Our friendly staff will help and we keep your information confidential.

SCHC & Partners Keeping Children Busy At Home

DOMINIKA SIEMIATKOWSKA, COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR – HEALTH PROMOTION



Jennifer Botelho, Coordinator of EarlyON Child and Family Centre, SCHC (right) and Leah Yuyitung, Resident Leader with Woburn Local Planning Table (left) packing up Boxes of Sunshine to deliver to local families.

During a time of change and uncertainty, it is considerably important for children to have a sense of security and normalcy, in particular, for healthy distractions to occupy them. Many of the families we serve in Scarborough are living in small spaces with limited indoor play resources. Due to stay at home orders, children do not have access to parks and facilities to exert their energy to maintain their wellbeing.

A local resident-led group, The Woburn Local Planning Table (LPT), reached out SCHC for support to keep their children healthy, mentally, emotionally and physically. Fortunately, SCHC had been the lucky beneficiary of a generous donation of Boxes of Sunshine to our SCHC EarlyON Child and Family Centre from a grassroots initiative developed by a stay-at-home mom wanting to help other families. These boxes provided puzzles, games, books and activities for families to do together. Fate was smiling on all of us to be able to share these when they were needed the most.

Woburn LPT resident leaders, Nita Goswami and Leah Yuyitung, worked with parent volunteers to distribute the activities to approximately 85 families and over 150 children ages 1-12yrs. The wonderful photos of the children that came in with special notes of thanks to us was incredibly heartwarming and an experience that we will cherish at SCHC.

This collaboration proved that, especially during difficult times, we can do much more when we work together.

"We wanted to bring a ray of light & joy into the hearts of little humans and their families. We hope these items help find aid, strength and comfort in these uncertain times!" Jennifer Botelho, Coordinator of EarlyON Child and Family Centre, SCHC



Pictures of children enjoying their new gifts and personal notes of thanks to SCHC brought joy to everyone involved in this special initiative.