

May / June

2012

# THE HEALTHY CORE

## HAMILTON URBAN CORE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE



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Denise Brooks  
Executive Director

### HOURS OF OPERATION

<b>Monday</b>	9:00am-5:00pm
<b>Tuesday</b>	9:00am-8:00pm
<b>Wednesday</b>	12:30pm-5:00pm
<b>Thursday</b>	9:00am-8:00pm
<b>Friday*</b>	9:00am-5:00pm
<b>Saturday**</b>	9:00am-1:00pm

\*Open 6:00pm to 9:00pm the third Friday of every month for Dinner & a Movie

\*\*Open the third Saturday of every month.

### NOTABLE QUOTE

*"If a hammer is your only tool, then every problem looks like a nail."*

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## Your Voice Matters

### Hamilton Urban Core Hosts Community Consultations

In June Hamilton Urban Core will be hosting a series of Community Consultations. The purpose of the Community Consultations is to build on the Connecting Communities sessions and to provide clients, community members, partners and others with an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas about service enhancement and expansion, about community engagement and development and about making a difference in areas that affect the health of families and communities. As the Core moves forward with its building project it is important that we hear from the people who not only come to the Centre and access the services and programs but also from those who are interested parties, partners and those not currently connected.

"Over the past few months I have connected with a variety of community members and leaders, many who are immigrants or refugees," says Souhaila Dihaini, Client and Community Engagement Coordinator for Hamilton Urban Core. "There are some very exciting things developing but most often I hear about the need for health services and information and the urgency people feel on a daily basis."

The Community Consultations will be recorded in print and video and the information resulting from the forums will be shared widely across the community with leaders, decision makers and funding sources. Further details about the Community Consultations will be circulated shortly or for information call 905-522-3233 for Souhaila, Client and Community Engagement Coordinator.

## CONNECTING COMMUNITIES FORUM



The community engagement process has been dynamic and highly interactive for Hamilton Urban Core. In February a second Connecting Communities Forum was held with representatives from 24 community organizations, associations and diverse community groups. There was lively discussion and a strong commitment to developing a plan for ongoing collaboration and partnership. As a result of the Connecting Communities Forum the Community Advisory Network was initiated marking another important milestone.

## Healing, Health and Hope in the Heart of the City

The Spectator Code Red Series and the follow-up report point to a serious situation brewing in Hamilton's inner city. At Hamilton Urban Core we know about this first-hand because the reports are about the very communities and neighborhoods we serve and represent.

Hamilton Urban Core is located at the corner of John and Rebecca streets in downtown Hamilton, in a building that many Hamiltonians remember as the old bus station. The building was never intended to be a health centre and while it is a good example of re-purposing an existing structure the building is no longer functional or safe. Some are amazed that the building is still here. With Hamilton Urban Core housed in a building that began with a few staff and about 200 clients it is not possible to safely and efficiently continue to provide the much-needed services for the thousands who now rely on the "Core".

A new building, a bigger space - that's a given. The cramped client service areas, the lack of privacy, too few exam rooms for health practitioners to see clients, the ancient boiler system that makes the Centre too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer, the flooding, concerns about the asbestos and the peeling paint .... The list goes on and the case is clear. We are on our way to a new building and we need everyone's help. We have been working on this for years. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care staff told us we are a priority nearly two years ago. The Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN says they are committed to helping us to get the much-needed new building. We have no reason to doubt this. Our lease expires in six months. Clearly anyone - everyone - can see this is an urgent situation.

But this is about so much more than bricks and mortar.

Every day people come through our doors who need help, who need the kind of services that are provided by the community health centre. A report, Addressing Ontario's great Health Divide by the Association of Ontario Health Centre says there are some 22,325 such people in the neighbourhoods and communities around Hamilton Urban Core. The Code Red report says that the health outcomes can be compared to or are worse than people in developing nations. These are people living in poverty, people with complex chronic health conditions, people who are marginalized, new immigrants, refugees and sadly, people who are socially excluded.

And what do the numbers tell us. Hamilton Urban Core has just more than 8,000 registered active clients. The poverty rate in Hamilton is reported at just under 20 percent. In some inner city neighbourhoods in Hamilton the poverty rate is more than 50 percent according to the Social Planning and Research Council report. For clients accessing Hamilton Urban Core it is 85 percent. A recently released Complexity of Care report notes that clients receiving services at community health centers have an average of 3 to 7 chronic health conditions such as diabetes, COPD or heart disease; at Hamilton Urban Core the average is 8 to 15 chronic health conditions per person. And the list goes on. In every category Hamilton Urban Core measures as serving individuals and families who are among the poorest with the greatest number of chronic health conditions, providing services in the worst building, with the fewest resources.

So why is this important? When people are sick or need help and don't have access to the services to keep them healthy it costs everyone and in some cases it even costs lives. Preventable emergency room visits, crisis treatment, inability to participate in society, or to work or volunteer - this all adds up to higher costs on the health system and the loss of hope for people. The Code Red Series in fact says the cost can be \$9.1 million dollars in a 2-year period for a hospital bed, emergency room visit and ambulance trip. That's just in one of the inner city neighbourhoods highlighted in the report.

We know that these are difficult financial times - everyone is expected to find ways to trim costs, to share, to collaborate and partner. We get it and we do that. But there is a point where what is needed is more resources or a re-direction of resources so that more is given in the area where the need is greater. This is about acting on a commitment to getting people the services they need when and where they are needed. This is health equity.

Over the past 16 years we have developed expertise in inner city health and health equity and being rooted in the core, we are an important part of the puzzle. We know what to do and there are thousands in our community who would benefit from our expanded services with better access to primary health care, less crisis more prevention, reduced isolation and increased connection, less despair and increased hope. This may not be the only answer but it goes a long way in making a difference. We are calling on community members and partners alike to join the campaign and help change the inner city by reaching out to others. And we are certain that together we will make the vision of a renewed "Core" a reality.

## Exciting Health and Wellness Projects

### Healing Hands

Reflexology is a focused pressure technique, usually directed at the feet or hands to help balance the body. Hamilton Urban Core is pleased to pilot **Healing Hands** reflexology program as part of the approach to reducing and managing stress. The program focuses on foot reflexology which is recognized for unblocks energy flows and increases blood circulation, thus helping to restore health and equilibrium.

Using a combination of individual reflexology therapy sessions, group education and demonstrations along with community outreach has resulted in an overwhelming response to the **Healing Hands** program. People report feeling less stress and increased energy after attending their appointments. Anyone interested in a demonstration or reflexology services should contact Miklos at 905-522-3233.

### Art from the Heart

**Art from the Heart** is an exciting new pilot program at Hamilton Urban Core. For the past few months **Art from the Heart** provided several groups session with the full and active participation of many clients and community members.



**Art from the Heart** is designed to: a) help clients who struggle with difficult emotions, or are chronically ill, isolated and/or who may have had refugee traumatic experience; b) help the process of newcomers' adaptation to the community while maintaining their culture and traditions and c) empower talented clients by enabling them to develop their art skills in a supportive environment. For information about the program schedule or other details please contact Gerardo at 905-522-3233.

### Never Come Back!

**"Never Come Back"**, is a gripping account of the experiences and realities of Roma people produced by video and film director Karl Nerenberg.

The documentary engages individuals and families and encourages them to tell their story. "This is an important film that will help people to better understand the real life experiences for so many Roma people," says Tibor Lukacs, a Hamilton Urban Core staff member featured in the documentary. "Hopefully this will raise awareness about the Roma population and the discrimination that is experienced on a daily basis."

Hamilton Urban Core held two special screenings of **"Never Come Back"** and the documentary was aired on OMNI early in May. **"Silenced: The Hidden Truth of Roma Poverty and Persecution"**, a 15 minute presentation prepared by Hamilton Urban Core staff was also shown and used to facilitate the discussion session following the film. For information contact Tibor at 905-522-3233.

## NEIGHBOURS FRIENDS AND FAMILIES (NFF)

The NFF Diverse (Immigrant and Refugee) Communities Hamilton is a community-based Project, which involves the collaboration of community members, leaders and representatives from diverse communities and agencies serving women and their families in Hamilton. Our approach is based on using appropriate strategies to reach out to immigrant and refugee women, neighbours, friends and families, who are abused by their husbands or partners.

In an eight month period the NFF project team provided 58 information sessions and focus group discussion.

Examples of NFF Immigrant and Refugees Communities Hamilton Activities include:

**"Feeling Good Inside and Out for Women of Colour"** a gentle outreach approach and trust building discussion group activity for women from the Sudanese and Roma communities.

**"Roma Women's Café"** a unique outreach approach identified through consultation with community members who were asked about the most culturally appropriate way to reach women in the Roma community.

**"EID Away from Home"** developed to outreach to people in the community during a time when many face a great deal of isolation and stress. The project team felt that this was a great trust building opportunity and engaged people at a time that is very important to them.

Over the course of the project hundreds of men and women from immigrant and refugee communities received information and often entered into important discussions amongst community members.

*"The social costs, including health care for victims, criminal justice, social services and lost productivity, are estimated in the billions of dollars; the psychological impacts for victims, their family and friends cannot be measured by dollars."*

(Statistics Canada)

## World Refugee Day Wednesday June 20th

**No one chooses to be a refugee.** Every minute eight people leave everything behind to escape war, persecution or terror. If conflict threatened your family, what would you do? Stay and risk your lives? Or try to flee, and risk kidnap, rape or torture? For many refugees the choice is between the horrific or something worse.

Often classified unfairly with economic migrants, refugees flee their country not for economic gain but to escape persecution, the threat of imprisonment and even threats to their lives. They need a safe haven where they can recover from mental and physical trauma and rebuild their hopes for a better future. The intolerance that is often at the root of internal displacement and refugee flows is also present in some of the countries that refugees flee to. Instead of finding empathy and understanding, they are often met with mistrust or scorn.

On World Refugee Day, let's not forget that some day in the future any one of us could be knocking at a stranger's door hoping to find a safe and friendly shelter. We should extend refugees the same kind of welcome we would like to receive if we were in their position.

- from UNHCR

## Mark Your Calendar!

On Wednesday June 6, 2012 Hamilton Urban Core will hold the **14th Annual Health Street Fair**. The theme for this year's Fair is "**Resources for Healthy Living**". Information will be available from a range of service providers with information tables along with prizes, games and the Core's famous BBQ and refreshments. Everyone is encouraged to attend the event. For information call 905-522-3233.

## Focus on Community Partner: Wesley Urban Ministries

For the past 16 years Hamilton Urban Core has enjoyed a mutually beneficial service relationship with Wesley Urban Ministries and can say that Wesley is one of our key partners. With roots in the community dating back to 1955 Wesley Urban Ministries is devoted to helping people in Hamilton be great. When asked why they exist their response is clear and direct "Wesley exists because poverty exists."

The 1950s marked the beginning of community service activities and recreational programs for Wesley and they located in the heart of Hamilton's downtown core, an area experiencing growing poverty. In 1955, United Church members from the Hamilton Presbytery began an outreach program, including a Sunday afternoon tea, for elderly individuals living with low incomes. In 1964, the local Mission Council formalized this work with the creation of the first Wesley Centre Board of Directors with a mandate to serve those facing the realities of poverty in the inner city.

Over years Wesley has continued to grow as a trusted service provider with wide range of programs and services from at least 8 different locations across Hamilton. One of the newest additions to the Wesley's service menu is the Resettlement Assistance Program for refugees.

Wesley is a valued community partner that remains commitment to the goal of never relenting in the fight against poverty and its impact.

For information call 905-528-5629

## Health Promotion Dates to Remember

### June

Seniors Month

Stroke Awareness Month

June 20: World Refugee Day

June 21: National Aboriginal Day

### July

July 11: World Population Day

July 28: World Hepatitis Day

## Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are needed in the following areas:

- 10th Anniversary Mind Body Spirit Women's Health and Wellness Conference Planning Committee
- Early Steps Child Development Program Assistant
- Immigrant and Refugee Program Assistant
- Street Drop In Preparation

For further information on becoming a volunteer or to register for the next volunteer orientation session call 905-522-3233