



SCARBOROUGH
CENTRE FOR
HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES

Newsletter

March 2024 Spring Issue



AUDIENCE AT BLACK
HISTORY MONTH EVENT

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH: BLACK EXCELLENCE

Charanjit Singh, Community Wellness & Engagement Manager

In the spirit of honouring Black History Month, our community came together for two unforgettable evenings filled with joy, artistry, and celebration. With over 100 attendees at each event (located at the Hub-Mid Scarborough and EarlyON Child & Family Centre), the energy was electric as we immersed ourselves in the rich tapestry of African-Caribbean culture.

The first event transported us through mesmerizing performances, from soul-stirring poetry to the infectious rhythms of drumming. Dance and song intertwined, reflecting the resilience and creativity of the Black community

Laughter echoed through the venue as we shared collective joy and appreciation moments. The second event continued the festivities with a diverse talent showcase, highlighting the multifaceted expressions of Black heritage. From traditional dances to contemporary spoken word, each performance resonated with authenticity and passion. As the night progressed, we embraced the spirit of togetherness, joining in communal dances that bridged generations and cultures.

Amidst the vibrant performances, delectable food delighted our senses, offering a taste of soulful cuisine that brought us closer together. Through these gatherings, we celebrated Black history and strengthened our community's bonds, fostering understanding, connection, and solidarity.

As we bid farewell to Black History Month, let us carry forward the spirit of celebration and unity, honouring the enduring legacy of resilience and cultural richness. We continue to weave 'a heritage to celebrate; a future to build'.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

SPRING 2024



CEO JEANIE ARGIROPOULOUS

VISION

Ignite the strength of community.

MISSION

Providing accessible, equitable and transformational health and social service choices, for the well-being of diverse communities.

VALUES

I2CARE
Inclusive
Innovation
Collaboration
Accessibility
Respect
Equity

With a busy winter season, the coming of spring brings renewed energy and enthusiasm. As you can see in our newsletter, many exciting things are happening at SCHC and in our community.

As I have the pleasure of serving this wonderful community and organization, I reflect on the inspiration I get from our dedicated staff, volunteers and community members. I appreciate the confidence and trust our funders have in us, as we continue to expand and meet the needs of the diverse communities of Scarborough.

Mostly, I am excited to see us living out our vision of igniting the strength of the community, as much of the work we are doing is in partnership with the community. So, as the days grow warmer and longer, I invite you all to find new ways to connect with your community, family, neighbours, friends or faith groups.

Connecting with our community provides important social connections and a sense of belonging fundamental to our overall health and well-being. Spring is also a wonderful time to reconnect with nature. Scarborough has many wonderful spots to take a walk, picnic, or read a book. Absorbing some natural vitamin D from the sunshine is exactly what the doctor ordered!



STAY CONNECTED WITH US

@SCHCOntario



@SCHCOnt





Wine & Wellness *LIVE AUCTION!*

An exquisite community event that seamlessly blends the sophistication of fine wines, and chocolate, with the essence of holistic well-being.

All funds raised go directly to SCHC programs and services for vulnerable youth and seniors in Scarborough.

April 25, 2024

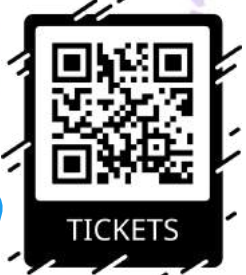
The Guild Inn Estate
201 Guildwood Parkway
Scarborough, Ontario, M1E 1P5

6:30 TO 9:00 PM

TICKETS: \$75

More Information:
www.schcontario.ca/SLA

TO PURCHASE TICKETS, SCAN HERE!



YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION



By Abira Vaithilingam, Coordinator of Marketing and Development

talk about it.

Learn more about preventing violence.

Victim Support Resources

- Counselling

Violence Prevention Workshops

- Build resilience
- Identify warning signs

Who We Support:

- Youth Facing Violence
- Victims of Bullying
- Families in Crisis

www.schcontario.ca/talkaboutit

Funded by

SCARBOROUGH CENTRE FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

talk about it.

Learn more about preventing violence.

WE NEED TO SAY

- Not in our home
- Not in our schools
- Not online
- Not in our neighbourhood

www.schcontario.ca/talkaboutit

Funded by

SCARBOROUGH CENTRE FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

In Partnership with the Good Guides, a local youth mentoring group, we work in high schools to provide pathways for success to at-risk youth. Our programs offer opportunities for students to earn volunteer high school hours, and provide spaces to develop positive relationships with peers and leaders.

Our team also has the support of a social worker to ensure youth have access to needed mental health support.

Our Goals

- We aim to support youth to find pathways to success.
- Decrease the number of reported incidents of youth violence in the targeted community.
- Foster a sense of community engagement and collaboration in preventing youth violence.
- Establish safe spaces for youth to gather, share experiences, and seek support.

Our newest campaign, Talk About It, has officially launched on social media and TTC buses across Scarborough! From March 4th to April 14, 2024, look out for TTC buses with our campaign ads! **If you see a TTC bus with the ad, snap a pic and send it to communication@schcontario.ca for your chance to win a gift card!** We are excited to invite everyone to join the conversation and help spread awareness about Youth Violence Prevention. Through this campaign, we aim to break the stigma surrounding youth violence and encourage open discussions.

By sharing personal stories, resources, and information, we hope to create a supportive community where individuals feel empowered to seek help and support one another. Together, we can make a difference in preventing youth violence in our homes, schools, online and neighbourhoods. **Let's talk about it!**

A GIFT TO REMEMBER 2023



Shivana Sankar, Community Services Manager

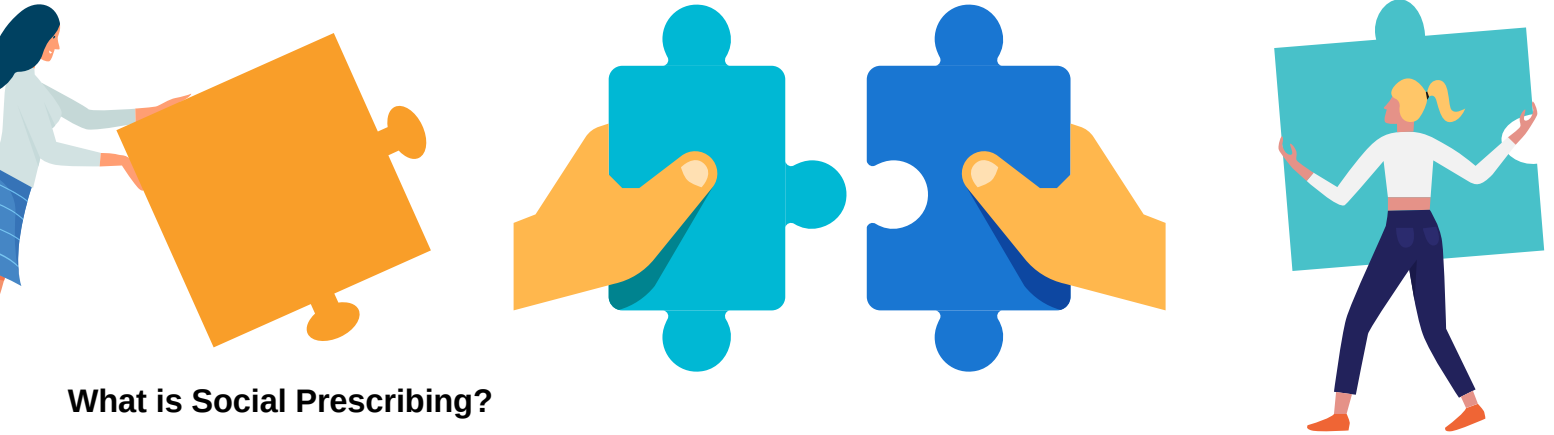
A Gift to Remember is a program that brings together the community, creating a space of joy for the individuals receiving support and those in a position to give during this season. This past year, the food bank team and their colleagues at the EarlyOn and Mid Scarborough Hub helped spread the holiday spirit to over 600 households. Supporting single individuals, seniors and families with added food supports and holiday gifts for those 18 and under. If this is your first time reading about this program, now is the time to learn about it, for later this year. A Gift to Remember is one of SCHCs' most extensive seasonal programs, where community members and private donors come together to raise funds, food and new gifts for families in need. We heard positive words from recipients ranging from a 'thank you' to very emotional displays, expressing their gratitude for receiving something for their family. A quote from one of the EarlyOn families: "Thank You SCHC, for the heartfelt gifts and for providing an inclusive and supportive environment for families." The Holiday season is a time of year that often causes great stress to many of the individuals using our programs, as they have expressed the difficulties of added expenses due to heating, clothing needs and holiday gifts. We are grateful to our partners and donors for helping us touch these families this year, and we look forward to this continued support in the next season.



SOCIAL PRESCRIBING AT SCHC: CONNECTING COMMUNITY AND WELL-BEING



By Perris Kajirwa,
Project Manager, Community Health Centre



What is Social Prescribing?

Social prescribing is a healthcare initiative that aims to address the diverse needs of individuals by connecting them with non-medical support services and community resources. It involves a referral pathway where individuals are prescribed personalized interventions tailored to their unique needs, challenges, and aspirations. These interventions include joining social groups, engaging in physical activities, participating in arts and cultural programs, accessing mental health support services, and much more.

Referral Pathway: A Seamless Journey to Well-being At SCHC, we have developed a seamless referral pathway to ensure individuals can access the Social Prescribing program easily. Here's how it works:

- 1. Identification:** Individuals are identified as potential candidates for social prescribing through various touchpoints, including primary care physicians, allied healthcare professionals, and community workers such as caseworkers and social workers.
- 2. Assessment:** Our dedicated team of social prescribing link workers conducts comprehensive assessments with individuals to understand their unique needs, challenges, and goals. This assessment helps us tailor interventions that are most suitable for their well-being.
- 3. Prescription:** Based on the assessment, our social prescribing link workers “prescribe” personalized interventions, which serve as a roadmap to guide individuals towards improved well-being. These prescriptions connect individuals with the relevant community resources and support services.
- 4. Connection:** Our link workers work closely with individuals to connect them with the identified resources and services. They provide ongoing support, guidance, and encouragement throughout the process.

[Read the full article here!](#)

PALLIATIVE CONFERENCE 2024



By Deby Kanagarajoo, Community Health Teams Manager

Palliative Care in a Changing World is the 2024 Palliative Care Conference that Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities hosts. The goal of this conference is to explore important topics that our industry experiences every day.

Key insights include

- Palliative Care in the Changing World: Cultural Mosaic and Beyond
- Restoring time
- Psychedelics at the End of Life
- Anti-Black Racism and the price of living and dying
- Certificate of attendance
- Industry Trade Show
- Breakfast, Breaks & lunch included



The conference includes continental breakfast, breaks, a sit-down luncheon, an industry trade show, event pricing and educational sessions from top industry professionals.

Date: March 27th, 2024

Time: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Location: Scarborough Convention Center



[or Register for the event here!](#)



**NADIA PRENDERGAST
RN, PHD**

Nadia Prendergast is an Assistant Professor at Toronto Metropolitan University. She completed her nursing degree at Sussex University, England, and worked as a public health nurse when she came to Canada.



JENNIFER SPEAR, MBA

Jennifer is a Recovering Corporate Executive, Keynote Speaker, Researcher, Facilitator, Emcee, Moderator and Trainer who loves challenging and partnering with her clients to Work & Lead UnScripted.



**OLGA NIKOLAJEV
RN, MA, FT**

TheraPsil, a pioneering nonprofit founded in 2019, is dedicated to transforming healthcare by advocating for legal access to psychedelic therapy for Canadians in medical need.



**DR JOAN
MACKENZIE CHAN,
MD CCFP**

Medicine is at a crossroads. Our daily work demands continue to increase, patients' health concerns grow more complex, and yet the system not only fails to rise to these challenges, but instead new cracks appear.



**CATHERINE CHAN
BA BSW MSW RSW**

Catherine is a social worker in community mental health, specializing in providing psychotherapy, clinical supervision, consultation, and senior management for services for clients experiencing trauma and transitions.



MICHELLE HILLIER

Michelle is on a quest for optimal wellness. Not only in her own life but for the lives of others. She is a sought-after educator, speaker (TEDx) and published author in wellness and movement education.

TO READ MORE ABOUT THE SPEAKERS, [CLICK HERE!](#)

SELF-CARE AS A PARENT



By Kerry-Ann McKenzie, Community Ambassador



After becoming a parent, the focus often shifts entirely to the child's needs. Parenting is an all-encompassing role, demanding 100% dedication. Amidst the responsibility of providing love, time, attention, security, and necessities, it's easy to lose sight of one's well-being.

Self-care as a parent is taking time to care for your spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental health. It can be asking yourself how you are feeling, assessing those feelings and considering the reasons why you might not be feeling like yourself. As parents, most of the things that derail our self-care are internal, so, we want to make sure that we are checking in with us.

Always try to remember that our children are as good as we are. They are brilliant and can tell when we are not at our best, no matter how much we think we are fooling them. If we take the time to care for ourselves, our children will care for themselves, each other and their communities.

My Self-care as a parent includes long walks in the forest, a path or a park. I feel like I am in my happy place when I connect with nature. I am most at peace sitting by a lake, a stream or a river. I have always gone on walks with my children, so this is a way that we connect with each other and nature. Self-care as a parent is more effective if your children understand that taking time out to process and reflect on life situations is essential.

I also reach out to family members and close friends if I am feeling down. Sometimes, self-care includes going out with a close family member or friend to catch up on life. Family connections are a great source of self-care for me as a parent. We all love reggae music, so sometimes we have a reggae party and dance our stresses away.

If you have any questions about self-care as a parent and youth violence, please get in touch with us at ambassador@schcontario.ca or visit the family wellbeing program page [here](#).

[Read the full article here!](#)

BRING A NATURAL BALANCE TO YOUR NUTRITION



Ruchika Wadhwa, Diabetes Dietitian Educator

DO YOU KNOW THAT DIETITIAN DAY IS CELEBRATED ON THE 3RD WEDNESDAY OF MARCH? THIS YEAR, IT FELL ON MARCH 20TH.

Food and nutrition have been popular topics in the media. The ubiquity of media - print, digital, social media, popular websites, and podcasts - has created new opportunities for dietitians to connect with clients and the public. It has also created challenges.

Self-proclaimed experts utilize various platforms to garner attention through compelling narratives and influence public opinion by sharing misleading information about food and nutrition.

The consequence of this can be the perpetuation of misinformation about fad diets/ habits.

From time-restricted eating (fasting) detox diets to cutting out specific food groups- there is information overload and mixed messages.



The confusion, a lack of information on how to meet their individual nutrient needs, inflation, and food insecurity have increased the risk of nutrient inadequacy. Research reveals that public misperceptions about various diets are prevalent, which could worsen existing nutrient inadequacies. This is troubling.

To connect with a dietitian at SCHC, call 416-642-9445

[Read the full article here!](#)

A DAY AT THE ADULT DAY PROGRAM IS ALWAYS FILLED WITH FUN

Megan Davies, Community Health and Support Services Manager



The Adult Day Program team would like to share some of the recent fun and engaging programming we have had over the past several months to beat those winter blues.

- In January, for a New Year's celebration, and on Monday, February 12, the Active Minds Club and the Adult Day Program joined together to celebrate with Emilio, a singer and dancer who always brings energy and beats to our program.
- Every other Friday in the afternoon, the clients enjoy a visit from some furry friends. Before having these animals on site, we consulted with caregivers and families to ensure no one was allergic or afraid of the animals. As always, in the ADP, we aim to stay client-focused.

- In the Active Minds Club, special programs this quarter included "Hey Baby!" and a Big Breakfast Day.

In the Active Minds Club and Adult Day Program, we look forward to sunny skies and a few days of programming in the park and walks around our neighbourhood.

The ADC is open Monday to Friday from 9-5 and conveniently near the HUB at 2658 Eglinton Ave East. Referrals can be made through Home and Community Care, 416-750-2444. The Active Minds Club runs on Mondays and Fridays. It is in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society of Toronto, which is aimed at clients who have a dementia diagnosis under the age of 65. For further information on either program, please call our Intake team at 416-847-4134.

SCARBOROUGH KIWANIS CLUB & SCHC PARTNERSHIP



Lori Beesley, Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement and Student Placement



On December 18, 2023, I was invited, along with a guest, to attend the first annual Scarborough Kiwanis Club Holiday Member's Potluck celebration. The event was held at the Clark Centre for the Arts, on the lovely historic grounds of the former Guild Inn. We were warmly welcomed and enjoyed a brief talk by Karen Harkins, Community Cultural Coordinator. She spoke about her experience curating exhibits at the Clark Centre and how the community is involved. If you have not been, I encourage you to visit! It's free and open every day from 9 am to 4 pm.

<https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/history-art-culture/cultural-centres-galleries/clark-centre-for-the-arts/>

The evening progressed, and I was asked to step forward as the special guest of honour. The Kiwanis Club presented SCHC with a wonderful monetary donation and the results of their Pink Drive. For those unaware, a Pink Drive is when a group collects and donates feminine hygiene products to a Food Bank, for distribution to female clients in need. The group was also very generous at the end of the evening when they donated all the remaining potluck food to our Food Bank lunch program, which I delivered the following day.

The Kiwanis Club is a wonderful organization and we look forward to having a long partnership with them moving ahead. **For more information about them, [click here!](#)**

TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH 2024

Rashme Nandakumar, Tamil Youth Coordinator

A huge thank you to everyone who supported us in commemorating Tamil Heritage Month this past January! The community embraced the opportunity to connect with one another, enjoy delicious food, fantastic cultural music, exciting dances, touching poetry and vibrant colours which filled the room. It brings us great joy to reflect on the rich cultural tapestry, profound contributions and the resilience of the Tamil community in Scarborough. The Tamil Heritage Month event was much more than a gathering of community, it was a celebration of vivacious culture as well as a moment to showcase and share the diverse talents and traditions which reflects the vibrant spirit and diversity that paints the Tamil community.

Unwavering support from our SCHC staff, volunteers, community partners, and attendees made the evening exceptionally special. At SCHC we aim to foster meaningful connections with community members and create lasting memories to fondly look back on, and we're thrilled to share that we were able to accomplish that through the Hub's Tamil Heritage Month event this year. We look forward to seeing everyone once again next year to celebrate together Tamil heritage and culture!



LOVE MY HUB EVENT

Laura McKim, HUB Coordinator



Above - Registration table with Behishta, Child & Youth Program Coordinator, and Rashme, Tamil Youth Outreach Worker



There were many positive discussions at the Love My Hub event, an annual spring potluck gathering exclusive to staff and partners. This event allowed us to meet and re-acquaint ourselves and hear about the many impactful programs and services we are offering. Like in previous years, we gave each team a few minutes to talk about their program, had information tables for program information, had a few activities, and did a brief presentation.

Among the participants was Charanjit Singh, Manager of the Community Wellness & Engagement team, alongside SCHC members, including Michelle West-Martin, Vice President of Community Services and Partnerships; Megan Davies, Manager of Community Health and Support Services and Deby Kanagarajoo, Community Health Teams Manager. Additionally, hub partners and staff participated in a "Passing the Mic" session to share program insights. There was also a presentation by Laura, the Community Hub Coordinator, and a Client testimonial by Shanae (Community resident) Some [key partners](#) present included Jennifer, the Dental Clerk, and Fiona Lee, the Dentist/Team Lead from the Toronto Public Health (TPH) dental clinic; and Julie, the Senior Manager of Education and Community Programs from the Alzheimer Society of Toronto (AST).



"DE-PRESCRIBING" FOR SENIORS



By Dr. Andrew Xiao

The well-being of older adults is our priority, so together, we can strive for healthier golden years.



Do I still need this medication?

As a physician dedicated to the health and well-being of our elderly community, I find it crucial to address a topic that directly impacts the lives of many seniors — reviewing and deprescribing medications. Let's explore why deprescribing is essential and how it aligns with our commitment to providing comprehensive care, exemplified by the Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities Geriatric Clinic.

The Importance of Deprescribing

Seniors often find themselves managing multiple medications to address various health concerns. While these medications may have been essential at one point, our bodies change with age, altering our medication needs. Deprescribing involves a careful reassessment of medications, aiming to discontinue those that may no longer be necessary or might pose risks to our senior population.

Streamlining Medication Regimens

Polypharmacy, or the simultaneous use of multiple medications, can be a significant concern. It increases the likelihood of drug interactions, side effects, and complications. Deprescribing helps streamline medication regimens, reducing the burden on the body and minimizing the chances of adverse reactions. We prioritize our seniors' well-being by tailoring treatment plans to individual needs.

Enhancing Quality of Life

Our ultimate goal as physicians is to improve the quality of life for our patients. Deprescribing plays a pivotal role in achieving this by alleviating the physical and financial burdens associated with unnecessary medications. Simplifying medication routines often leads to better adherence to essential treatments, promoting overall well-being and a higher quality of life for our elderly patients.

[Read the full article here!](#)

WE ALL NEED A LITTLE PAWS-ITIVITY

Carlos David Almeida Marcillo, Community Ambassador

What would you suggest if you were asked to think of anything that would help high-school students de-stress before their exams? For us, our answer to that question was hosting an event where youth could pet and interact with therapy dogs - an event we titled “Paw-positivity.” We held this two-day event on January 19 and 20, 2024, to give students a much-needed break from the cold weather and upcoming high school exams.

Staff from various programs at SCHC helped to make this event better than I could have imagined, including High-Priority Community Strategy, Family Well-Being, Youth Violence Prevention, Child & Youth Program, and the Hub Community Wellness & Engagement Team, among others. Additionally, with the support of staff and volunteers from Sunshine Therapy Dogs, we were able to have three therapy dogs available for students on each day of the event.

Organizing this event took time and effort from everyone involved, and we are all pleased with its impact on participants and staff. On the days of the event, high-school students could interact with the therapy dogs, access academic and mental health resources, take photos with friends and family, and play board games together. There was a buzz of excitement from participants and staff alike, and the event was successful in helping participants to relax. We are all looking forward to the next opportunity to host a therapy dog event for community members.

