



## CARE4KIDS: SUPPORTING HEALTHY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

By Bandana Thapa, Nurse Practitioner

At Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities (SCHC), we recognize the unique challenges faced by families without access to primary care. The **Care4Kids program** is now up and running to help address this gap, providing comprehensive health services to children and families who do not have a registered healthcare provider.

Care4Kids focuses on ensuring that unregistered children receive well-baby/well-child checkups, routine immunizations, and access to primary healthcare services. Our program aims to bridge the gap in care by offering these essential services, free of charge, to families in need.

Read more about the importance of vaccinations and well-baby and well-child visits by [clicking here](#).

# Newsletter

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CEO JEANIE ARGIROPOULOS

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

## WINTER 2024



As we approach the winter season, I am reminded of the warmth that comes from community, collaboration, and care. At Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities, we are more committed than ever to our vision of providing accessible, equitable, and transformational health and social service choices for the well-being of all the communities we serve.

We believe that everyone, regardless of background or circumstance, deserves the opportunity to thrive. This vision drives everything we do—from offering compassionate care to ensuring that all individuals have the tools and support they need to live healthier, more fulfilling lives. Our work is rooted in the understanding that each community has unique needs, and we are continuously striving to create services that are responsive, inclusive, and tailored to those needs.

In this season of reflection and renewal, we remain focused on breaking down barriers to care and addressing health disparities. We are proud of the strides we've made, but we know that the journey towards true health equity is ongoing. Every step we take is one towards creating lasting, positive change that ignites the strength of all community.

Thank you for being part of this important work. Together, we are building a healthier, more equitable future for all.

### 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



STAY CONNECTED WITH US!

@SCHCOntario



@SCHCOnt



# TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION



Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities (SCHC) and Scarborough Health Network (SHN) hosted a **Truth and Reconciliation event** on Thursday, September 21, 2024, at Thomson Memorial Park. Community members gathered to learn, connect, and honour the ongoing journey toward reconciliation and collective healing. The event featured powerful speakers, including Blackwolf Hart, moving performances by Indigenous drummers and singers, and the **Sea of Orange Walk**. It was deeply moving to witness people from all walks of life wearing orange and coming together to honour residential school survivors and remember the children who never came home.



# MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK



For **World Mental Health Day**, SCHC hosted a special Wellness Day for all staff, featuring a variety of activities to promote relaxation and self-care. The day included delicious smoothies, soothing massages, receiving plants, and interactive workshops focused on yoga and mindfulness.



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT: FENNIE TOYCO

By Abira Vaithilingam, Marketing and Fund Development Coordinator



Fennie Toyco's inspiring journey to becoming a Registered Practical Nurse at SCHC began when she emigrated from the Philippines to Canada in 2011. With 17 years of experience as a Registered Nurse in the Philippines, she started from scratch, volunteering at SCHC before earning her nursing license in 2012. Her role at SCHC has evolved over time, with responsibilities similar to those of an RN, including managing appointments and conducting medical tests.

Despite initial challenges with language barriers, Fennie adapted and contributed significantly to establishing new clinics. Known for her compassion and dedication, she has earned appreciation from both clients and colleagues. Fennie's journey reflects resilience and passion for nursing, as she continues to make a positive impact in the Scarborough community.

To read more about Fennie's journey, [click here](#).

# LET'S MAKE TIME, ACT TODAY TO CHANGE TOMORROW



By Sarmini Subramaniam RN and Ruchika Wadhwa RD

November is observed as **Diabetes Awareness month** with November 14 being World Diabetes Day (WDD). Did you know? The rates of diabetes in Scarborough are amongst the highest at 12.45 per 100 as compared to the average 9.64 per 100 in Ontario.

To raise awareness, on November 14, 2024, Scarborough Community Diabetes Program organized an eventful afternoon on **Diabetes Prevention & Management**. This free event was a tremendous success with over 80 Scarborough residents and community members attending it.

The event featured a variety of engaging activities, including a presentation by Maxine, MSW, which highlighted the importance of lifestyle management. Maxine demonstrated simple home exercises and concluded her session with a calming meditation and yoga practice. Attendees enjoyed games, raffle prizes, and vendor exhibits showcasing resources for diabetes management. The event concluded with an uplifting line-dancing performance by a group of seniors, leaving the audience smiling and engaged.

To read more about this event or to connect with diabetes services, [click here](#).



# SCHC RISE TOGETHER!



By Abirah Chandraraj, Communications and Marketing Coordinator



This year, SCHC took its annual United Way fundraising campaign to new heights — quite literally! As part of this year’s **United Way ClimbUP** challenge, a few determined and enthusiastic staff members tackled the 1,776 steps of Toronto’s iconic CN Tower.

Our dedicated team, fittingly named “**SCHC Rise Together,**” embraced the challenge and raised an impressive \$2,820, demonstrating both their commitment to physical endurance and their passion for building a stronger community.

**Why did we take on this challenge?** Every dollar raised by our team supports vital programs addressing affordable housing, food insecurity, and mental health challenges across the GTA. The climb wasn’t just a test of strength and stamina; it was a powerful reminder of what we can achieve when we rise together. As a community health organization, SCHC is proud to support causes that align with our vision to ignite the strength of community in Scarborough and beyond.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated and cheered us on from the ground up. Your support made every step count! Together, we’re building a brighter, more equitable future!

**#SCARBOROUGHSTRONG**

## STAY PROTECTED THIS WINTER SEASON!

Click below to get access to accurate, essential information about vaccinations from our Scarborough Ambassadors and staff members in different languages.

ENGLISH

SPANISH

ARABIC

URDU



# CELEBRATING COMMUNITY LOVE & RESILIENCY: HUB FEST 2024



By Carlos Almeida Marcillo – Project Coordinator: Community Violence Mapping



Thank you to everyone who came together with us to celebrate our annual Hub Festival on September 28, 2024. Together, we enjoyed an exciting evening that highlighted the love and resilience of our communities! The event featured a variety of activities, raffle giveaways, delicious food served directly from our BBQ grill, live music, performances, and a range of vendors offering goods and services.



This year, we were thrilled to have Toronto Fire and Toronto Police attend, engaging with the community. Our Hub and external partners such as IMPACT N' Communities, Youth Link, TNO, BBBST, Vasantham, and ESBGC also had tables to share information about their services and resources available to the community. Over 300 community members came out to enjoy the festivities and celebrate together.



On behalf of everyone at Hub Mid Scarborough, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the staff, volunteers, partners, and vendors who participated and showed their support for our community event.



Your participation and contributions significantly enhanced our ability to host an event that aligns with SCHC's mission to support the holistic health needs of our community in Scarborough. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year at the 2025 Hub Festival!

## A SPOOK-TACULAR SUCCESS!

By Rashme Nandakumar, Youth Network Ambassador

This October, the spirits were high, the thrills were terrifying, and the screams echoed through the night – all thanks to the *bone-chilling* success of The Hub **Halloween Haunted House**, presented by the MSYL Youth!

It was a frightfully good time for nearly 200 brave souls who dared to step into our haunted house. Thank you to everyone who joined us for a night of screams, shrieks, and spine-tingling fun. But that's not all – we also *summoned* some community spirit through our **Scare Away the Hunger drive**. Haunted house goers were encouraged to donate non-perishable items, and the response was *bewitching*! A special shout out to our frightful volunteers, who went *all-in* on the haunted house design and performances. We can't wait to make next year's haunted house even *scarier* and more *ghoul-tastic* than before! **Come if you dare!**



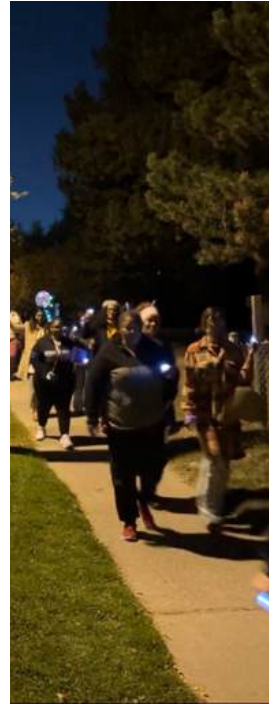
# TAKE BACK THE NIGHT



By Rashme Nandakumar, Youth Network Ambassador

The first-ever Take Back the Night – female Safety Walk presented by the Hub Mid Scarborough brought together a vibrant group of female-identifying individuals to unite against violence and celebrate the strength of women in the community. The event was a transformative evening, filled with energy, hope and solidarity. Participants walked together through the neighbourhood, turning public spaces after dark into safer and empowering places. Along the way the group shared stories and simply enjoyed the joy of lighting sparklers and singing together. The walk led to a nearby park, where the group gathered to reflect, engage in meaningful conversations and connect in their shared commitment to resisting violence against women after dark. The night featured performances, snacks and opportunity for connection creating a warm and supportive atmosphere.

The event was a powerful reminder of the importance of standing together and connecting as a community. We hope to continue the efforts to empower women and inspire future action against gender-based violence and look forward to coming together again. Thank you to everyone that made this event possible!



## FURNITURE BANK DONATIONS

By Nicole Walters, Furniture Bank Program Supports Worker

It may be hard to believe, but there are many Scarborough residents that live in houses without proper furniture. If you are someone that is moving, re-decorating, or de-cluttering, please consider donating your gently used furniture, small household items, and/or kitchen wares to those in need. Our SCHC Furniture Bank is looking for donations such as beds, mattresses, cabinets, sofas, dining tables, chairs, dressers, and desks. Now more than ever, especially now as the temperature drops, your donation can support low-income Scarborough residents to feel more at home!

**Interested in donating?** Make an appointment to drop off your items by calling 647-381-5435 or emailing [furniturebank@schcontario.ca](mailto:furniturebank@schcontario.ca).

We hope to see more donations this holiday season to make someone's home feel more joyful and special!

# FORGET ME NOT CAMPAIGN



By Deby Kanagarajoo, Community Health Teams Manager

**F**orget-Me-Not fundraising campaign is aimed at providing direct support to the Hospice Palliative and Bereavement Care Program. The Palliative Care Community Team (PCCT) is a multidisciplinary group of healthcare professionals, including physicians and nurses, who provide palliative care in your home.

**Palliative care** is a philosophy of care that aims to relieve suffering – physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual – to improve the quality of life for those living with a life-limiting illness, through to the end of life. The goal of this care is to provide comfort, dignity, and autonomy to the person living with this illness, and provide the best possible support to their family and caregivers. These supports can also include non-medical services including our [Home Volunteer Program](#), [Psychosocial Spiritual Care](#), [Support Groups](#), and Bereavement Care.

This year we were privileged to take our campaign to the Zoo, Scarborough Village, Scarborough Civic Centre and Omni Towers. This campaign also raised awareness of the importance of Palliative Care Journey and the need for early intervention. Through outreach efforts, we were able to reach over 200 Community members.

**DONATE**



You can still donate to the Forget Me Not Campaign to support our Hospice and Palliative Care Programs throughout the year.





# A GIFT TO REMEMBER 2024: BRINGING JOY TO FAMILIES IN NEED

By Kishoak Ranganathan, Communications, Marketing & Social Media Student Intern

As we approach the holiday season, we are reminded that for many families in Scarborough, the holidays can be a difficult time. It can be challenging for many families in Scarborough, especially with rising costs and ongoing hardships.

That's where **A Gift to Remember** comes in. For 26 years, this heartwarming initiative at SCHC has helped bring holiday cheer to **over 29,000 families**. Through the generosity of community members, staff, and donors, this program provides essential items, food, toys, and gifts to those in need, ensuring that families have something to look forward to during the festive season.

## How You Can Help

You can make a real difference in the lives of families this year by:



**Donating Funds:** A \$50 donation can provide a holiday meal and gift for one person, while \$250 supports a family of four. Donate securely online at [schcontario.ca/donate](https://schcontario.ca/donate) and designate your gift to "A Gift to Remember."



**Organizing a Drive:** Rally your community, workplace, or group to collect food, toys, or gift cards. For a list of needed items or to register your drive, contact [fundraising@schcontario.ca](mailto:fundraising@schcontario.ca).



**Gift Cards:** Donate \$25-\$50 gift cards (Walmart, Amazon, Scarborough Town Centre, President's Choice) to help families purchase what they need.



Your support makes the holidays brighter for so many, and we are incredibly grateful for your contribution. Your support ensures that families can enjoy the holidays with warmth and a sense of hope. Whether through donations or organizing a drive, every contribution makes a difference.

For more details about this campaign or to get involved, visit our [A Gift to Remember](#) page or contact **Shivana Sankar** at [ssankar@schcontario.ca](mailto:ssankar@schcontario.ca) or 416-847-4141.

Let's work together to make this holiday season brighter for those who need it most!

# A GIFT TO REMEMBER

HELP SUPPORT FAMILIES IN SCARBOROUGH!

NOV 1 TO DEC 31, 2024



# NEW BREAST SCREENING GUIDELINE



By Suad Abukar, Registered Nurse, Preventative Care Program (PCP)



## DID YOU KNOW?

In October 2024, the Ontario Breast Screening Program lowered the starting age for screenings from 50 to 40 years old. Individuals aged 40 and over can now receive an OHIP-covered mammogram without needing a referral from a doctor or nurse practitioner.

## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

The Ontario Breast Screening Program offers breast cancer screening to women, Two-Spirit people, trans people and non binary people ages 40 to 74 who qualify for the program.

## ELIGIBILITY:

People ages 40 to 74 are eligible for screening if they:

- have no breast cancer symptoms
- have no personal history of breast cancer
- have not had a mastectomy (surgery to remove breast tissue)
- have not had a screening mammogram within the last 11 months
- if transfeminine, have used feminizing hormones for at least 5 years in a row

## WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU MAKE INFORMED HEALTH DECISIONS:

Early screening (40 – 49) is recommended but not mandatory. For assistance in making an informed decision regarding mammography and your health, please reach out to the Preventative Care Team at SCHC.

Contact us at: [ambassador@schcontario.ca](mailto:ambassador@schcontario.ca) or (416)-847-4134



# STAFF STEP CHALLENGE AND WINTER ACTIVITY TIPS

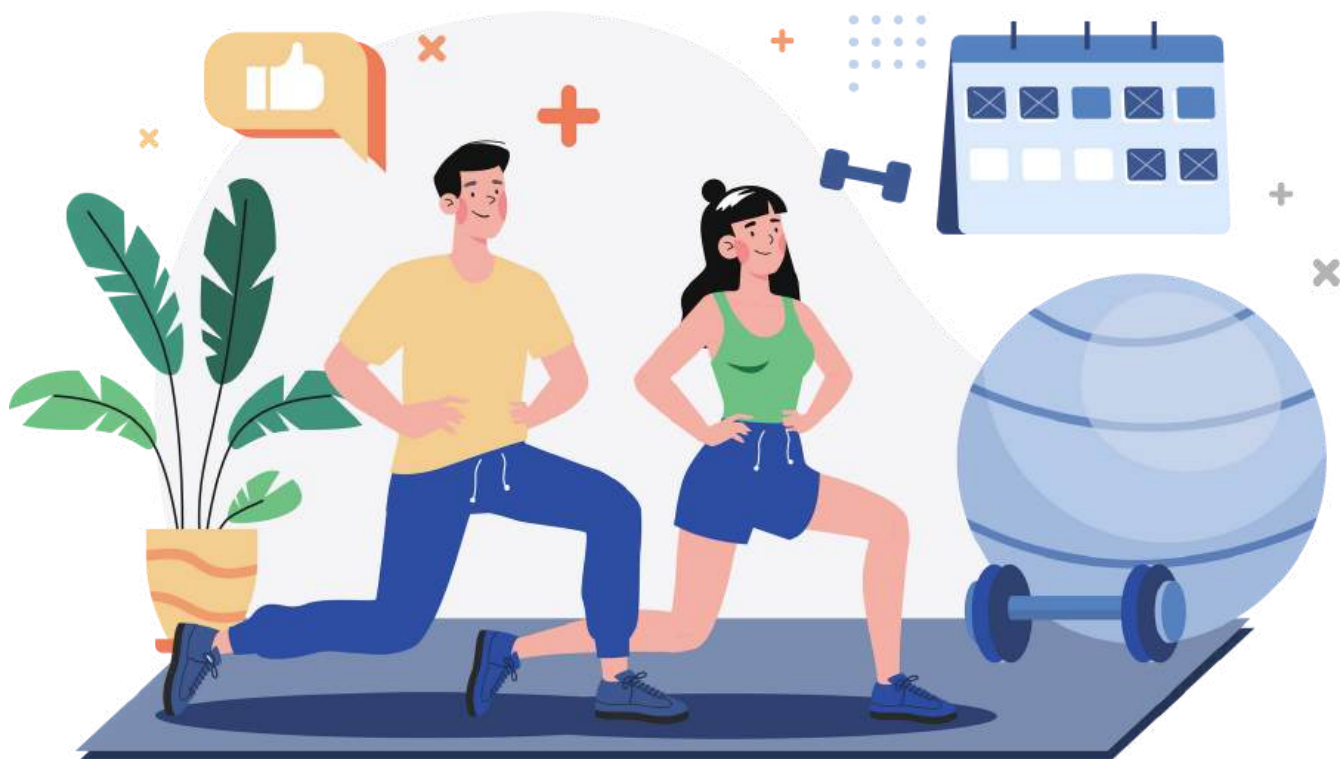


By Kisha Goode, Health Promotion Specialist

## What is 15,721,797?

The number of steps taken by SCHC staff during **September's All-Staff Step Challenge!** With participation from 18 different teams/program areas, the competition was a fun way to increase physical activity and encourage engagement among SCHC staff. Not only did participants strengthen team bonds by rallying their team members to keep stepping, but the challenge also allowed participants to get to know other staff across the organization. Shout outs to our prize winners: CHC 520 team (Sonia, Winslet, Janina, and Nailah), who had the highest average team steps, Stan from ADC with the highest overall steps, Janina from CHC 520 with the highest overall step day, and Ummey from the ADC for the being most improved stepper. Congratulations SCHC as the ultimate prize was won by everyone who participated: engaging in personal health promoting behaviour!

With winter coming, motivation for physical activity can be a struggle. However, there are safe and free ways to **stay active during the colder months**. Here are a few: bundle up and take a walk in the daylight, if it's not icy. You'll be surprised at quickly you'll warm up! You can also check out the free indoor tracks at Stephen Leacock Community Recreation Centre or the Toronto PanAm Centre. If staying at home, try an online workout, dancing or walking around your home.





# SAVE THE DATE

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2025

By Abirah Chandraraj and Nicole Walters

Mark your calendars! This February, in honour of Black History Month 2025, the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDI&B) team at SCHC is thrilled to host two exciting events that you won't want to miss.

During the weeks of February 17th and February 24th, join us at the HUB (2660 Eglinton Ave E) as we come together to celebrate the richness of Black history, culture, and resilience with two powerful events:

- **Black Wellness is Black Resistance** - An inspiring event focused on Black mental health and wellness, highlighting how wellness serves as a form of resistance and empowerment.
- **Black Resistance Celebration** – Celebrating the power of Black resistance featuring captivating performances, a variety of local vendors, delicious food, exciting prizes, and more.



These events are free and open to all community members, making them the perfect opportunity to connect, learn, and celebrate. Stay tuned for more details and spread the word – let's honour Black history and the spirit of resistance together!



OUR ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT IS HAPPENING AND YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS IT.

24 DAY

04 MONTH

25 YEAR

Toast, Play & Build Community Together

# THANK YOU!



If you wish to help support our programs and services, go to our website to [DONATE NOW](#) through our secure webpage.



*FOLLOW US ON SOCIALS!*

