

StreetHealth

ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008



Painting of Street Health commissioned by peace activist Fred Dunn, February 2007, Urs Kehl

Street Health works to improve the health and well being of homeless and underhoused individuals in southeast Toronto by addressing the social determinants of health through programs, services, education and advocacy.

A Message from the Board Chair

Welcome to this review of the 2007 activities at Street Health.

I would like to begin by taking note of an important change that is taking place for improving the management of government-funded health services in Ontario. As of April 2007, health service priorities are coordinated by one of the 14 "Local Health Integration Networks" (LHINs) into which Ontario is organized. We are one of the health agencies in the "Toronto Central LHIN" which serve the residents of downtown Toronto. Our LHIN has identified key priorities for focus in its first three years. Amongst these priorities is "Mental Health and Addictions", a priority area in which Street Health has a long history of working cooperatively with other social and health service agencies on behalf of the people we serve.

At the other end of the scale are day-to-day events. Some of our services are funded on a time-limited basis from various levels of government and require active pursuit each year for continuation. In 2007, we were able to secure funding for each of these programs – sometimes "down to the wire". Also, with a staff of over two dozen people, we had our share of employee events including the births of two children! Congratulations to Lorie and Amanda.

To keep the organization in balance with both the small changes and the large ones in our environment, we pursue continuous internal renewal and external evaluation. In 2007, we amended our by-laws regarding Board membership and altered our management structure to provide improved oversight and supervision. An external review of two of our core services, the nursing and mental health programs has begun, and we look forward to the results as we move forward into 2008.



Michael Treuman
Board Chair

A Message from the Executive Director

2007 was a truly significant year in Street Health's 22 year history!

In September, the **Street Health Report 2007** was launched to huge acclaim. A follow up to the 1992 Street Health Report, the results of the 2007 report show a worsening situation for homeless people in Toronto in both health status and in their ability to access the health care they require (full report at www.streethealth.ca).

Since its public launch and its subsequent distribution to a vast and diverse audience, the **Street Health Report 2007** has made a major impact becoming a "must read" for frontline workers, homeless advocates, civil servants and elected politicians alike.

It is through research such as the **Street Health Report 2007** that Street Health will continue to strive for changes in public policy that will benefit homeless and other streetinvolved people in Toronto and across Canada including the creation of affordable and supporting housing.

While our advocacy efforts carry on, Street Health will also continue to provide its high quality programs and services to our homeless clients by a committed and caring staff.

As always, I want to extend my appreciation to the members of the Board of Directors for volunteering their time and congratulate them for their tremendous efforts and positive results they helped bring about this past year!

Finally, I would like to acknowledge our generous donors and other supporters who have helped make this another successful year for Street Health. Looking forward to working with you all in 2008!



Laura Cowan
Executive Director

Board of Directors

Michael Treuman
Chair

Sharole Gabriel
Vice Chair

Jeff Lewis
Treasurer

Jim Meeks
Community Liaison

Christine Archer
Samuel Awe
Dennis Chow
Brian Dubourdieu
Jill Evans
Scott Goodman
Nancy Marr
Mel Starkman

Staff

Executive Director
Laura Cowan

Administrative Coordinator
Jane Mountain

Development & Fundraising Manager
Amanda Robertson

Reception
June Rogers
Rediet Tekeste

Nursing Program
Andrea Hanlan
Laura Hanson
Beth Pelton
Andrea Rossignol

Community Mental Health Program
Maurice Adongo
Nick Falvo
Fiona Husband
Danielle Koyama
Wangari Muriuki
Paula Tookey

Harm Reduction + Hep C Support
Wendy Babcock
Zoe Dodd
John MacDonald
Mary Kay MacVicar
Ross McKim
Lorie Steer

Research
Erika Khandor
Kate Mason

PAID ID Program
Gaetan Heroux

Access ID Program + ID Safe
Linda Hazard
Lennox Holdford
Myra Piercey

Health Promotion
Beric German

OUR PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Nursing Program

Staff nurses work with volunteer nurses and nurse practitioners to operate scheduled clinics in drop-in centres and shelters. In addition, nursing outreach is designed to locate people living on the street who generally avoid mainstream services. The nurses advocate for clients on an individual basis and participate in systemic advocacy, challenging systemic barriers which prevent every person's right to appropriate, accessible, and timely health care despite their individual circumstances.



"Nurse, Andrea Hanlan providing support to a client at a nursing clinic."

Mentoring of nursing and medical students and providing educational sessions for community groups and schools are important components of our program.

Community Mental Health Program

Street Health's community mental health program provides support for people who are homeless or under-housed and experiencing mental health issues. The Community Mental Health Outreach Workers assist people in trying to access basic needs such as shelter and housing, income, health care, and ID, which are fundamental determinants of health. Other support includes crisis intervention, outreach, informal counselling, and legal support as well as facilitating access to other community resources. The program also focuses on advocating for individual clients as well as addressing systemically on issues of poverty, homelessness, and human rights.

Harm Reduction Program

The street outreach team provides clients with referrals and peer support related to the harms associated with substance use. The program includes needle distribution, safer crack kit distribution, street outreach service, and support for sex workers. This year, Street Health partnered with the Sherbourne Health Centre Health Bus to offer early morning services and health care to sex workers.

Hepatitis C Support & Education

Nearly one quarter of homeless people in Toronto have Hepatitis C and face major barriers to health care (Street Health, 2007). Street Health provides support, referrals, and prevention education for clients who have Hepatitis C. Street Health recently partnered with Regent Park and South Riverdale Community Health Centres to provide access to treatment for street involved people with Hepatitis C. The project offers peer support as well as access to an interdisciplinary team of health care providers.

The Crack Users Project (CUP)

The *Crack Users Project* continues to be Toronto's only program aimed at reducing the harms associated with the use of crack cocaine. The project includes three weekly drop-ins, a health-care clinic with a Nurse Practitioner, housing help, a Community Support Worker, and peer training opportunities. In April, CUP members participated in a community-clean up day – picking up litter in the neighbourhood in celebration of Earth Day. Graduates from the CUP outreach training program conduct street outreach with their peers and share what they have learned about safer drug use practices and strategies.

I.D. Replacement – Access to Health Cards for the Homeless (Access)

In 2007, 28% of homeless people were refused health care because they did not have a health card (Street Health, 2007). Street Health's *Access to Health Cards* program was established to assist homeless people with the onerous task of applying for health cards and the other personal identification they need to access health and social services. Last year, the *Access to Health Cards* program completed over 4,000 applications for ID, an average of about 335 per month.

Partners for Access and Identification (PAID)

Street Health is a lead agency in the *PAID Project* which runs identification replacement clinics across Toronto. Outreach workers help homeless people obtain identification such as birth certificates, landed papers, health cards, Indian status, and Social Insurance cards. The PAID project also connects people to other services such as primary health care facilities, sources of housing and food, other programs, and community-based supports.

ID Safe

Homeless and under-housed individuals can easily lose their identification due to unstable living conditions. The *ID Safe* program at Street Health offers security for homeless people by storing their important identification documents, helping them to maintain access to services which require proof of identification. Approximately 500 people currently keep their identification safe with Street Health. An evaluation of the ID Safe this winter found that this service greatly improves identification retention and 89% of clients felt that having a safe place to store their ID had helped to stabilize or improve their lives in some way.

Research

This past September, Street Health released the findings from its comprehensive study on the health status and access to health care of homeless people in Toronto. *The Street Health Report 2007* has already proven to be a valuable source of information and a tool for advocacy for Street Health and for other community agencies and coalitions working to address issues of homelessness.



"The Street Health Report 2007 Launch."

Community Health Promotion

Street Health has been involved in a number of initiatives over the past year that address poverty and homelessness: an anti-poverty rally at Queen's Park just prior to the last provincial election drew over 800 people; a community forum to discuss solutions related to an ongoing bed bug infestation attracted 300 participants; a Housing Not War campaign (see article on page 4); numerous media interviews; education and advocacy with politicians, decision makers and community partners on the issues facing homeless people.

Mail Service

Homeless people by definition lack the postal address required to qualify for certain services. Street Health will provide a mailing address and handles a person's mail.

HOUSING NOT WAR!

Street Health has a long history of leading and participating in community coalitions aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty. In 1998, staff at Street Health helped to form the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee which went on to lead a campaign to declare homelessness a national disaster. As part of this campaign, some of Canada's largest cities and thousands of individuals demanded an extra 1% of the federal budget be spent on affordable housing. Although federal governments have thus far refused, vital emergency relief funding for homelessness was established in response to these advocacy efforts.



"Demonstrators at the February protest in downtown Toronto. Street Health staff member Beric German is on far left."

Picture generously provided by multimedia journalist John Bonnar.

In the years since, spending on housing and homelessness has remained inadequate, while spending on other priorities such as the military has significantly increased. The military budget now represents 8.5% of all Federal spending and yet Canada remains one of the few countries in the world without a national housing program.

In contrast, only 1% of the federal budget is devoted to housing and supports.

Perhaps not surprisingly, homelessness has been increasing along with its inevitable outcomes: suffering, the spread of communicable diseases, and deaths. In 1992, Street Health released the *Street Health Report*, commended by the World Health Organization for exposing the poor health status of homeless people in Canada. Fifteen years later, the new *Street Health Report 2007* outlines and documents the downward trajectory of homeless peoples' health.

Today, Street Health continues to be part of the chorus of voices demanding that the federal government address Canada's housing crisis. In the last year, the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee and the Canadian Peace Alliance united to launch a national "Housing Not War" campaign. In less than six months, about 190 organizations and thousands of individuals have signed a declaration asking that the government shift funding and spend an extra one percent of the budget on social housing.

In recent months, Street Health staff have participated in several demonstrations to appeal that some of the resources spent on military action in Afghanistan be diverted for social housing. In February, a press conference and protest was held outside Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's office in downtown Toronto. Street Health was there along with a broad collection of anti-poverty agencies and concerned citizens.

As homelessness worsens in Canada, Street Health will continue to work alongside groups like the Toronto Drop-In Coalition, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, the Council of Canadians and many others, including actors such as Gordon Pinsent, Sarah Polley, Shirley Douglas, and Eric Peterson who feel that the federal government can no longer justify spending a disproportionate amount of the budget on the military while so many Canadians live in poverty. To learn more about the Housing Not War campaign, please visit www.housingnotwar.ca.

SHARE THE LOVE 2008

On April 15th 2008, Share the Love held its first annual fundraising event on behalf of Street Health. Each year, this wonderful new organization selects a different charity to raise funds for the incredible work that organization provides for its community.

Share the Love was a huge success, raising almost \$5,000 for Street Health's Nursing and Outreach programs! All of us at Street Health were enormously touched by the

organizer's efforts on behalf of our agency, and the almost 200 people who took part to support our organization. A fantastic evening was had by everyone with live Motown music, delicious food, a raffle, door prizes, and an amazing silent auction with over 50 items!

On behalf of everyone at Street Health, thank you, from the bottom of our hearts!



"Some of the over 200 people who attended Share the Love."

SAFER STREETS FOR SEX WORKERS THROUGH INNOVATION & PARTNERSHIP

For several years, Street Health has offered programs and services aimed at improving the lives of street-based sex workers.

Street-based sex work is one of the most dangerous occupations in Canada, but frequent assaults often go unreported. The criminalization of sex work in Canada and the stigma and discrimination by police officers towards individuals who engage in sex work, are the primary barriers that prevent sex workers from making reports to police.

In 2003, Street Health partnered with the Toronto Police Services, Special Victims Unit to develop an initiative aimed at increasing the number of sex workers who are willing to come forward and report crimes against them (for example, physical and sexual assault or robbery) to police. This initiative takes a “harm reduction” approach to the needs of sex workers by focusing solely on the crime being reported and not on any of the related criminal activities that sometimes surround sex work. The project includes police outreach, a nighttime drop-in for sex workers and an anonymous crime reporting line exclusively for sex workers. This unique initiative is the only police service unit in the world that has sex workers and community members on its advisory board and that takes a harm reduction approach.

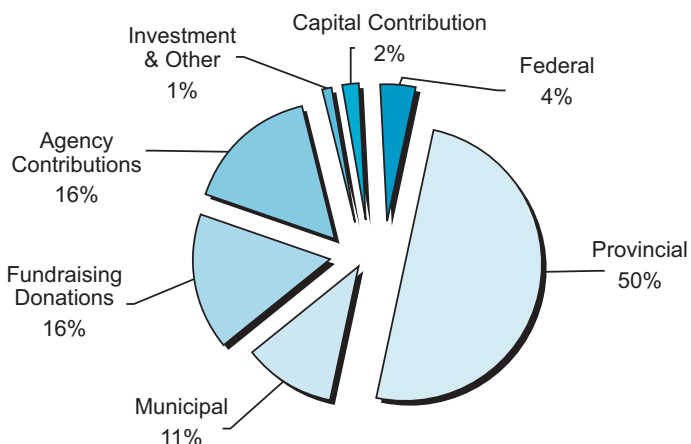
As a result, sex workers are now more likely to report crimes against them to police, regardless of their use of drugs or the illegal nature of their work and consequently more perpetrators of violence against sex workers are going to trial. This past year, the project became a permanent Toronto Police Service program! In May 2008, Wendy Babcock, a Street Health staff member, made a presentation about the Special Victims Unit at the International Harm Reduction Association Conference in Barcelona.

Street Health has also recently received funding to begin a training program for sex workers. The project, which begins in June, will involve ten women taking part in training and education over 20 weeks on topics such as conflict resolution, self-defense, first aid, and self-care. The women will also be trained and offered opportunities to do harm reduction outreach to sex workers along with Street Health staff.

Fundraising 2007-2008

Despite increasing competition for charitable dollars, this was a successful year for Street Health’s annual fundraising campaigns. We revitalized existing relationships, created new funding opportunities, and increased overall participation in all our fundraising efforts. The Development Program at Street Health allows our existing programs to flourish, makes possible new initiatives, and ensures long-term organizational growth. If you are interested in hearing more about our efforts, please contact us at (416) 921-8668 extension 229 or by email at info@streethealth.ca! On behalf of all of us at Street Health, thank you for answering our call for help!

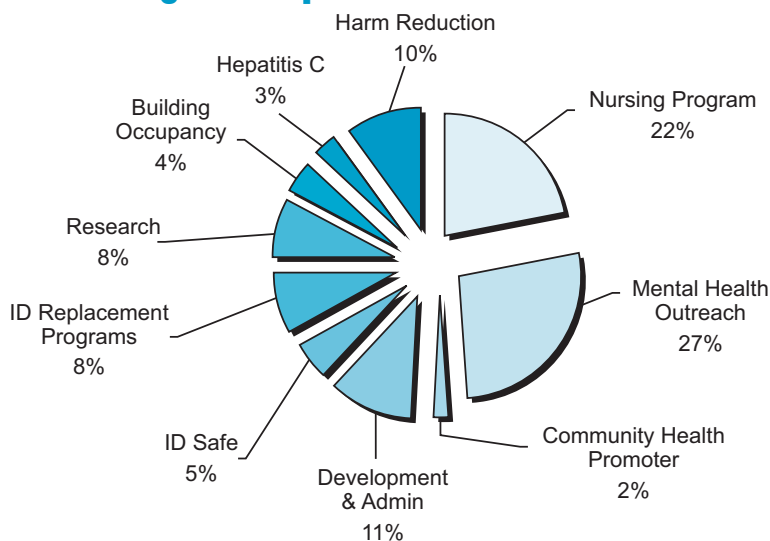
Street Health Revenue 2007-2008



Finance

Street Health is a fiscally responsible organization. Each dollar is carefully accounted for to ensure that we are providing the highest level of support and services possible to our clients, as well as enables Street Health to be a sustainable organization. We have some stable core funding, however, donations and grants allow us to add new and innovative services for our homeless clients, while continuing to provide high quality care.

Program Expenditures 2007-2008



STREET HEALTH'S 2008 FUNDRAISER: AN EVENING OF FUNK

We are busy planning for Street Health's 8th annual 2008 fundraising event at the Steam Whistle Brewing Company in downtown Toronto. This year's event will be held on **Tuesday, September 16** and promises to be bigger and better than ever. Our goal is to raise over \$50,000. Proceeds will go towards purchasing much needed medical supplies, as well as provide medical services and compassionate care to a community that so desperately needs it.

Our theme this year will be **Street Health's 2008 Fundraiser: An Evening of Funk**. This fun-packed event will feature live musical entertainment by recording artists **God Made Me Funky** who were nominated for a 2008 Juno award for best R&B/Soul recording of the year for their "We Can All Be Free " album. Influenced by grand funk masters like Earth Wind and Fire, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, and Sly and the Family Stone, this band with their very danceable and high-energy style will be sure to get everyone out on the dance floor! **To find out more, visit the band's website at: godmademefunky.com.**



We also have lots of other fun activities planned like our traditional oyster bar, and awesome raffle, as well as some new activities like a silent auction with over 50 fabulous items to bid on, a photography booth, and much more!

If you are interested in volunteering to help make this event a huge success, want more information, or to purchase tickets, please phone us at (416) 921-8668 at extension 229 or by email at info@streethealth.ca. Exciting details will also be posted on the Street Health website located at streethealth.ca as they unfold.



YES, I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT STREET HEALTH'S NURSING OUTREACH PROGRAM

I want to help you provide vital services for those people living on the street. Enclosed is my donation for:

\$35 \$50 \$80 \$100 \$250 I would prefer to give \$ _____

My payment preference is: Master Card Visa Cheque enclosed (please make payable to Street Health)

Credit Card # _____ Expiry Date ____ / ____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code _____

Donations of \$100 or more *or* joining our monthly giving program will entitle you to a complimentary copy of *The Street Health Report 2007*.

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR.

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO BECOME PART OF THE STREET HEALTH FAMILY!

Please process my monthly donation for:

\$20 \$35 \$50 \$100 I would prefer to give \$ _____

Master Card # _____ VisaCard # _____ Expiry Date ____ / ____

If you would prefer to have your donation debited from your bank account on a monthly basis, please include a blank cheque marked "VOID" with this donor coupon. All banking information is kept confidential.

Please detach this coupon and send with your donation.

All donations are tax deductible.

Charitable Registration # 11920-0541-RR0001

Street Health, 338 Dundas Street East, Toronto ON, M5A 2A1 (416) 921 8668

