

StreetHealth

AN EMPOWERING NEW PROJECT FOR WOMEN

Street Health has identified a strong need to support women who engage in sex work in our community. There is substantial research evidence identifying that sex workers are at an overwhelmingly high risk of experiencing frequent and brutal physical violence. A study conducted in Western Canada where 47 sex workers were interviewed found that not only did women describe the level of violence as extreme, but that such extreme violence was perceived as normal or expected (Nixon, Tutty, Downe, Gorkoff & Ursel, 2002). Women involved in sex work are at risk of violence from many different sources, including intimate partners, pimps, customers, the police, and the public. According to the Toronto Police Sex Crimes Unit, there are 4-5 assaults on sex workers in Toronto every night. These statistics clearly demonstrate the need for an organized response to the violence sex workers face on a daily basis. We at Street Health believe that people involved in sex work are the best candidates for this initiative as they have the skills, expertise and credibility to work with other people involved in sex work. From this belief a new and innovative program has recently been launched.



Members of the Safer Stroll Project at Street Health show their strength after participating in a two day self defense training course.

Street Health's Safer Stroll Outreach Project is aimed at increasing the capacity of both sex workers and social service agencies to address violence in this community. Launched in June 2008, seven sex trade workers met for two hours weekly for 20 weeks to participate in health and safety workshops. Some of the workshop content included situation-specific self defence training and sexual health education. Prior to participating in this project, many of the participants felt that violence was unavoidable and expected. Now, after participating in this program, these

women no longer feel like victims and are armed with the knowledge to protect themselves.

The second phase of the Safer Stroll Outreach Project will be a series of workshops with the goal of training participants to become peer-educators and experts. Graduates of the program will go out into the community and educate fellow sex trade workers and social service agencies on how to handle and reduce incidences of violence. Staff members at social service agencies will be provided training on the correct protocol for reporting and documenting this type of violence. Police reports submitted to Statistics Canada, between 1991 and 2004 recorded 171 female sex workers were murdered, and 45 percent of these homicides remain unsolved - (Subcommittee on Solicitation Laws of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, final report. 2006). It is clear that better reporting is vital. A manual of best practices and educational materials will be compiled and disseminated.

Funded by Status of Women Canada (a Federal Government organization), this project has significantly increased the confidence of each participant, provided the opportunity for in-depth counselling, and has enhanced access to primary health care. For more information on the Safer Stroll Outreach Project, please email marykay@streethealth.ca or wendy@streethealth.ca.

23 YEARS AND STILL MAKING A DIFFERENCE!!

THANK YOU to everyone who cares deeply about the issues facing homeless people. We cannot continue providing our crucial services without you. A special thank you to our major donors of 2008-2009!

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The Ben & Hilda Katz Foundation
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In-Kind Donors

Thank you to everyone who donates their time, products, or services to Street Health.

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Mr. David Callighan
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Mr. Don Dudar
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Two/Ten Foundation of Canada

... and many other generous individuals and companies!

On February 12th, 2009 staff and clients marked Street Health's 23rd year of providing care and services to the homeless and under-housed community of Toronto. Each year, the Street Health team throws a party for our homeless and under-housed clients. A full course meal, dancing, music, and an opportunity for people to socialize in a warm and inviting environment were provided. Each person who attended the event received a cozy Street Health sweat-shirt.

The celebration was held at the Toronto Friendship Centre, across the street from our Street Health office. Jewell Catering Company continued their generous tradition of donating and serving a hot delicious meal to over 200 partygoers. A special thank you to Michael Jewell and his amazing team for their kindness and generosity and to the volunteers at the Toronto Friendship Centre, who made our party a huge success. Happy 23rd Birthday Street Health!



Party goers enjoying a hot delicious meal donated by Jewell Catering on a cold day at Street Health's 23rd Birthday celebration.

HOLIDAY AUCTION A HUGE SUCCESS!

Loft dwellers give back to people living on the street. Each year the Merchandise Building Original Lofts, located at 155 Dalhousie Street in Toronto, host a holiday party and silent auction benefiting Street Health. This year's celebration did not disappoint. With over 300 participants, a full buffet by Amazing Food Caterers, and live jazz music courtesy of the band Fusion, this party was a huge success. Auction items were donated by building residents and contractors working in the building. Over 95 items ranging from artwork and cameras to jewellery raised close to \$3500.00 for Street Health. Thank you so much to the Merchandise Building for your kindness and generosity.

DOWNTOWN EAST END RECLAIM THE STREETS RALLY AND MARCH TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

On August 2, 2008, Carolyn Connolly was found murdered in an alley off Seaton Street, in the downtown east area of Toronto. Over the years, many other women in our community have been victims of murder, rape and assault.

Women who are homeless or under-housed face far more violence than the general population. Risk factors that contribute to incidences of violence include a shortage of shelters and safe affordable housing, inadequate income support, and not enough support services for women.

In an effort to call for an end to violence against women in our community, Street Health joined forces with our sisters in the community to for the first Downtown East End Reclaim the Streets Rally and March.

The rally, held on the evening of October 24, 2008 at the Regent Park Community Health Centre, was kicked off with a hot meal before we took to the streets. Over 100 people,

led by women, marched through the darkened neighbourhood. Armed with sidewalk chalk, an important and powerful message was communicated on building walls and streets: violence against women must be stopped. We will not be silent while women are attacked and murdered. We will continue to demand the support we need in order to be safe in our neighbourhood. Participants left that evening with a renewed sense of hope and empowerment. The event was a huge success.

Thank you to our co-sponsors: Street Health, Regent Park Community Health Centre, Bad Date Coalition, Manitou Kwe Singers, Central Neighbourhood House, CUPE 4308, 416 Community Support for Women, Voices of Positive Women, PASAN, TRCCMWAR, Sherbourne Health Centre, South Riverdale Community Health Centre, and Nellie's Women's Shelter.

THE 2009 HOMELESSNESS CONFERENCE

Street Health was out in full force at this year's national homelessness conference which took place February 18th -20th, 2009 at the University of Calgary. The conference entitled: Growing Home: Housing and Homelessness in Canada brought together over 600 individuals from across the country. Participants included policy analysts, advocates, practitioners, people who have experienced homelessness, scholars and other concerned citizens, each sharing information and promoting meaningful discussions on the issues facing our homeless population.

Five Street Health staff members gave innovative presentations in their areas of expertise. As well, our own Health Promoter, Beric German participated on a National Panel in a discussion on Eliminating Poverty and Providing Appropriate Housing from a national perspective. German says looming job losses in a country without adequate employment insurance, welfare or national housing strategy is potentially dangerous. "The recession is going to change all of our lives in some fashion, and for people with a lower income or who become unemployed, this can mean homelessness", says Beric.

The conference marked an important step in the ongoing battle to eradicate homelessness. For more information on the conference please visit www.nhc.ca.

WHAT DO PEOPLE SAY ABOUT VOLUNTEERING AT STREET HEALTH?

"Volunteering is a thrill. I get to connect and have a laugh once a week."

"Wendy has been really good to me, I get good support from all the Staff."

"Russ is my inspiration. He shows us what a peer can accomplish looking!"

"I always get to meet interesting people here, it keeps me in touch with society; it helps to keep me well."

"It's the most social thing I do all week!"

"I've been coming here for over 6 years."

STREET HEALTH CLIENTS RECEIVE LIFE-SAVING BLANKETS FROM THE TZU CHI FOUNDATION



Nurse Andrea Hanlan accepting a generous gift of blankets from the Tzu Chi Foundation.

On Monday December 8th, 2008 the Tzu Chi Foundation along with Street Health staff and volunteers distributed over 100 warm blankets to Street Health clients at the Toronto Friendship Centre Drop-in, located at Dundas and Sherbourne streets. The day was a huge success with a tremendous turn out of people who came to receive the much needed blankets. Of special note is that the blankets are environmentally friendly and manufactured from recycled materials. The Friendship Centre staff and volunteers served a delicious meal and hot drinks. Despite the cold weather, there was an atmosphere of warmth, fun, and friendship. We extend our deepest gratitude to our friends at the Tzu Chi Foundation and the Friendship Centre Drop-in for making this meaningful day possible.

MAKING A DONATION TO STREET HEALTH IS NOW EASIER THAN EVER!



You can make a donation to Street Health through a secure online donation system. Just go to canadahelps.org and type Street Health in "search".

OR...

It's as easy as clicking on the "Donate Now" button on our website located at streethealth.ca, scrolling down and then clicking on the CanadaHelps link.

Exciting features include a monthly giving option or making your donation in honour or in memory of someone special. VISA and Master Card are accepted.

A charitable tax receipt will be automatically issued to you by CanadaHelps.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

SEND A DONATION TO STREET HEALTH ~ Your donation will help us expand our programs to better serve our clients.

ORGANIZE A FUNDRAISER ~ Street Health would love to help you plan a fundraising event through your club, church or office. Please call for more details.

ADVOCATE FOR THE HOMELESS ~ Express your concerns to your municipal, provincial and federal politicians...
WRITING A LETTER CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

GIVE STREET HEALTH A VOICE ~ Our staff would be happy to speak to your organization, staff, club or church about our programs and the needs of our clients.

DONATE SLEEPING BAGS AND WINTER WARMTH ITEMS~ Please give your used sleeping bags, winter coats, warm clothing, new socks and footwear to Street Health for our Sleeping Bag Distribution and Winter Warmth Project.

This symbol was used by American hoboes in the early part of the twentieth century. It indicated that "if you are sick, they will care for you here"

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

STREET HEALTH

338 Dundas Street East
Toronto, Ontario M5A 2A1

Phone: 416-921-8668
Fax: 416-921-5233

E-mail:
info@streethealth.ca
www.streethealth.ca

Charitable Registration
11920-0541-RR0001

STREET HEALTH'S current board members include:

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