

Street Health

Reducing the Harms Caused by Homelessness

1. Allan Gardens - Identification Outreach Worker

During COVID the crowded conditions in shelters left hundreds of people resorting to living in encampments to protect their health and safety. This past year, we have regularly witnessed the forcible dismantling of these communities, even when no alternatives were available. Street Health has a dedicated Identification (ID) Outreach Worker who goes to encampments and the shelter hotels to help people gain the ID they require for any available housing option/waiting lists.

2. Sherbourne Health Centre – Health Bus

Street Health Outreach Workers are part of the team working from this mobile health unit. The bus makes scheduled stops throughout the community. In the last year this mobile clinic has provided vaccines and the support for those who don't access usual health care settings to learn more about the benefits of vaccination.

3. Seaton House

4. Maxwell Meighen Centre

Pre-COVID two of the largest shelters provided beds for close to 1,000 men each night. Clients staying at these locations regularly access Street Health services including access to personal care and hygiene items, as well as harm reduction supplies and education. Our Mental Health Workers support those who need intensive support to navigate systems and access options for well-being.

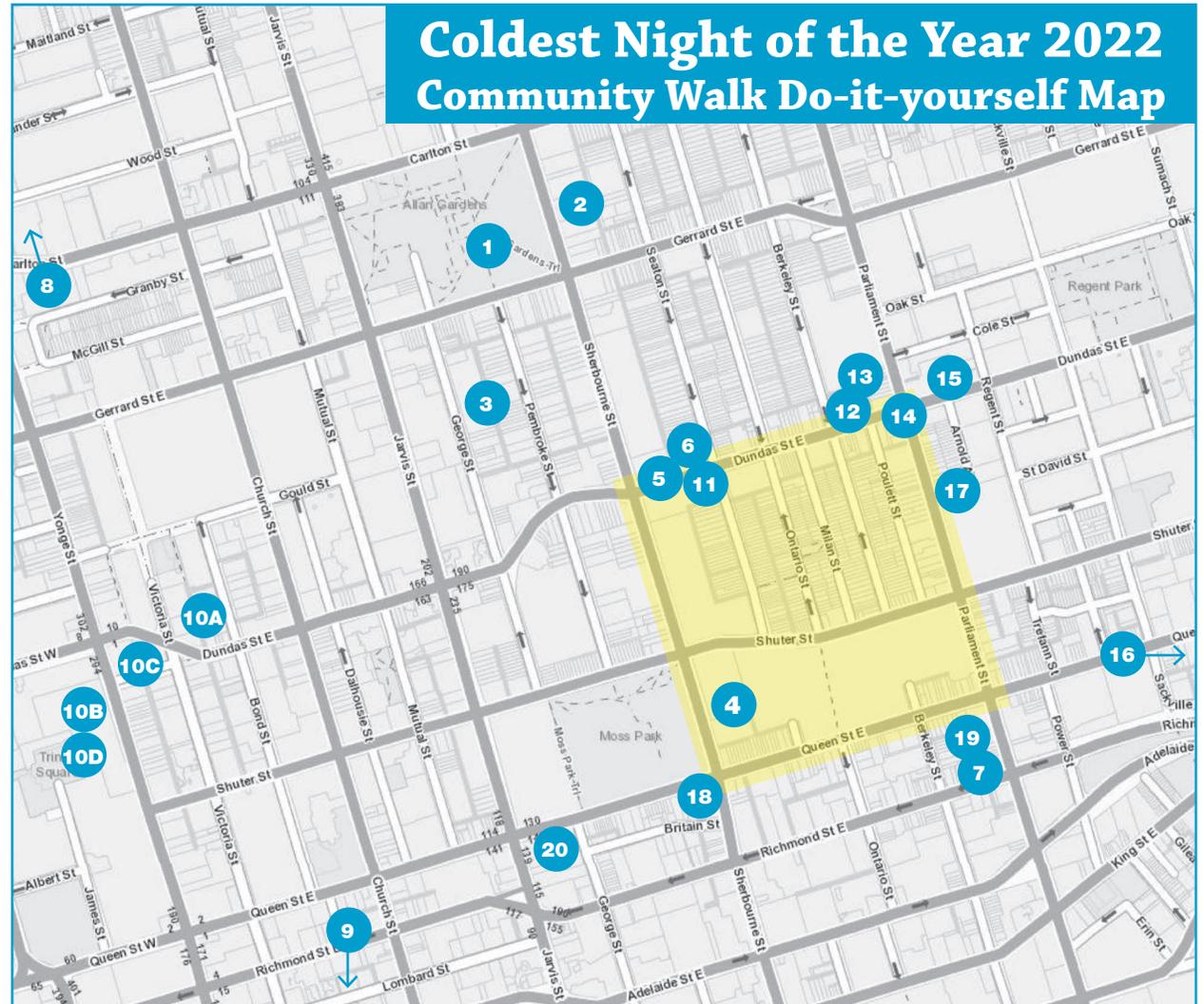
5. All Saints Church

a. Street Health partners with All Saints for space to deliver two harm reduction drop-in programs and a volunteer kit makers group. Kit makers, draw from the community of individuals who have lived experience of homelessness and/or substance use. The group meets weekly to help assemble harm reduction kits, form connections and gain access to resources. This group helps participants develop confidence, gain skills and reduce isolation.

b. Harm Reduction Drop-Ins provide a weekly evening opportunity for community members to come together, share a nutritious meal, participate in a range of health-related education topics and build their connections. As required, these sessions are adapted to follow evolving public health guidelines and continue to provide supports including Hep C testing and grief counselling.

c. In partnership with TransPride Toronto and The Bad Date Coalition, Street Health offers a weekly drop-in for non-binary people, trans and cis women who are homeless and/or street-involved. These sessions focus on increasing the safety and community connections of individuals experiencing an increase in isolation and violence as a result of COVID.

Coldest Night of the Year 2022 Community Walk Do-it-yourself Map



6. Street Health

a. Street Health has both Registered Nurses with specialized footcare training and Nurse Practitioners. Clinics offered each week see clients on a drop-in basis, no health card required and each client's identified need is the focus of the visit.

b. ID clinics help clients replace lost or stolen ID. Over 500 individuals also use the ID Safe which stores ID and provides a secure mailing address.

c. Overdose Prevention Site (OPS). Since 2018, the OPS has been serving a high percentage of women and offers wrap-around care (access to other healthcare services). In 2021 the OPS reversed 89 overdoses and provided more than 600 health referrals. Other Safe Consumption sites in the downtown east include: Regent Park CHC (RPCHC, see #15), Moss Park (see #18), The Works (see #10A), and Fred Victor (see #20).

d. Safer Opioid Supply (SOS). Since 2021, Street Health has been part of a federally funded SOS program. A team of Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, and Case Managers work with clients to reduce their dependency on the poisoned street drug supply. SOS partners are: RPCHC (see #15) and South Riverdale CHC (see #16)

7. PASAN

Street Health partners on projects that support those with lived experience to develop their capacity and skills providing community supports. Current programs include the Community Care Project, which cleans up discarded harm reduction supplies.

8. Housing Support Partnership with St. Clare's - Housing Support Workers

Three Street Health staff provide case management to support individuals who access housing through St. Clare's. The program focuses on individuals who are chronically homeless or insecurely housed. This spring Street Health staff will be assisting more than 20 people to move into the newest location, 877 Yonge St. Staff support clients to ensure they can maintain their housing.

9. Socially-distanced COVID Hotels - Harm Reduction Outreach

Outreach Workers are at two hotels, accommodating 300+ men and women. These facilities are run by other community partners. Street Health staff bring the harm reduction focus and expertise.

Street Health Harm Reduction Outreach Workers provide a vital presence and service at these COVID facilities. Outreach Workers provide overdose response training and they support peer workers, who stay at the facility. People who bring lived experience to their roles have a credibility and ability to connect with those who are in a similar situation.

Street Health was among the first organizations to advocate for services based on the principle of Harm Reduction. Harm reduction means: the policies, programs and practices which reduce the negative health, social and economic consequences that may result from the use of both legal and illegal drugs, without necessarily reducing drug use. The cornerstones of harm reduction are public health, human rights and social justice. The recent proposal by Toronto Public Health requesting the legalization of small amounts of drugs for personal use is a harm reduction initiative.

10. Additional highlights — Yonge & Dundas

A. The Works

Toronto Public Health opened the city's first permanent supervised injection service on November 8, 2017. This life-saving health service provides a safe and hygienic environment for people to inject pre-obtained drugs under the supervision of qualified staff.

B. TransPride Toronto (see #5c)

Founded in 2004, Trans Pride Toronto works to better the health and well-being of Trans and 2Spirit folks through advocacy, training and workshops within agencies, events and spaces that Trans/2Spirit people access. <https://www.facebook.com/TransPrideTorontoTT>

C. Weathered Exhibit — August, 2020

In August of 2020, Twentytwenty Arts, a visual story-telling non profit, created awareness on the issue of overdose through the Weathered project. They invited those who have lost a family member or friend due to the toxic drug supply to submit a photo and narrative about their loved one. The shared memories are a beautiful and haunting reminder of the people who are being lost to overdose – they are from all walks of life, they were loved and they had so much potential to offer the world. Street Health was proud to be the charity partner for this initiative. See the exhibit at <https://www.streethealth.ca/weathered/remembering-friends-and-family/franky-s-friend>. We are reminded that stigma and shame are driving this crisis as much as toxic drugs. People are so much more than their drug use, and Overdose Prevention Sites save lives.

D. Homeless Memorial – Trinity Square

Here is the reality of homelessness in the city of Toronto. listed on this sign outside the church of the holy trinity are the names of the people who have died since 1985. Keep in mind, these are only the names we know. These names were collected by members of Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC). The memorial has an official website at <http://www.geocities.com/hommem/> and it's maintained by local activist Tanya Gulliver.

11. Margaret's Drop-In

12. Thunder Woman Healing Lodge Society

13. 416 Community Support for Women

14. Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural

15. Regent Park CHC

16. South Riverdale CHC

17. Sound Times Support Services

18. Consumption and Treatment Service Moss Park

19. Maggie's Toronto Sex Workers Action Project

