

StreetHealth

TAKING CARE OF OUR CLIENTS - ONE "STEP" AT A TIME

As we have shared with our readers and donors in the past, one of the biggest issues facing homeless people in Toronto is wear and tear on their feet. It is an endless battle to maintain the health of one's feet while enduring life on the streets. Days spent walking from one service to another mean shoes have a short life span. Also, foot ailments if left untreated can lead to chronic disorders.



Nurse Allana Sullivan provides much needed therapeutic foot treatments to Street Health clients through our new foot care clinics!

Once again, Street Health has effectively responded to an acute need in the homeless community. Recently Allana Sullivan, one of the members of the nursing team, completed her certification in Advanced Nursing Foot Care at Georgian College, qualifying her to delivery more in-depth care for people who are experiencing serious issues with their feet. Congratulations Allana! Now, in addition to our regularly scheduled nursing clinics and outreach visits, we are able to offer specified foot care clinics to our clients. Street Health has joined forces with EcuHomes, St. James Cathedral, and Margaret Fraser House where Allana is now contributing her foot care knowledge and skills for those who are homeless or under housed in downtown Toronto.

Allana treats a wide variety of foot-related ailments including calluses, corns, warts and severely ingrown nails. Diabetic ulcers are also quite frequently seen on the feet of homeless people. With diabetes comes a lack of sensation in the feet. Consequently a small stone in a person's shoe may not be felt and as it rubs away at the skin, open wounds occur. The presence of diabetes also slows down the healing process, so constant care to prevent infection is extremely important. Allana works diligently to manage these wounds in order to avoid these and other serious health issues.

Isolation and loneliness are often hallmarks of a life lived on the street. Many people go long periods of time without the experience of a sociable conversation or a friendly touch. The foot care clinics offer rare opportunities for someone to sit and speak to Allana in an unhurried, therapeutic environment. "I love being able to provide the pleasure that comes with soaking sore, tired feet in warm, soapy water. It's a huge deal for them", says Allana.

Recently an elderly man hobbled into the foot care clinic, barely able to walk. It was evident that his feet were causing him a lot of pain. After soaking his feet and treating his badly ingrown toenails, the man slipped on his shoes and did a little dance right in the middle of clinic! His nails had been so long that they had been slicing into his toes as well as making his shoes extremely tight. As a result of his advanced age and lack of mobility he had been unable to do anything about it himself. Allana was able to give him back his mobility through her expert foot care.

"The need for this type of service in the community is huge and can make such an impact on a person's life", say Allana. It is a fact that foot health is an integral part of the overall health of our bodies. Our feet carry our entire weight and move us through the world. Our mobility, gait and balance depend on good foot health and can compound other health issues - especially within the elderly population. Although we have probably all experienced what it is like to spend an entire day in uncomfortable shoes, it is difficult to imagine what it must be like to have severe blisters that only get worse and sores that cannot heal. Street Health is committed to working with our community partners to provide a basic yet vital service to our clients.

For many people on the street a pair of dry socks is an infrequent luxury. As a means of enhancing this new nursing service, Street Health would like to be able to distribute a pair of socks to each person who is treated at our foot care clinics, but we need your help. If you would like to make a donation to this fund or you would like to donate 10 or more pairs of new socks, please contact amanda@streethealth.ca or call 416 921 8668 x229. Thank you so much for your support!



NURSING ADVOCACY EFFORTS AT STREET HEALTH - WORKING UPSTREAM FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

An integral part of nursing is practicing health promotion and illness prevention. This becomes difficult when working with individuals living in poverty. The clients that Street Health has traditionally worked with lack access to the basic necessities needed for a healthy lifestyle and they are forced to cope with high levels of stress on a daily basis. The nurses at Street Health must therefore advocate for healthy public policies and adequate resources which will promote health within the homeless and poor communities of Toronto.

Below are a few of the advocacy activities the Street Health nurses are actively engaged in:

The Tuberculosis Coalition: This group monitors and assesses the incidence of TB Toronto and the GTA while identifying barriers to treatment faced by recent immigrants and those who are homeless. The coalition is currently in the process of developing a number of support groups for individuals with tuberculosis.

Hot Weather Response Committee: Organized by the City of Toronto, Department of Public Health, this group is made up of City employees and community service providers. The Committee engages in preparing an adequate response to Hot Weather and Extreme Hot Weather Alerts as called by the City with an emphasis on those citizens who are socially marginalized such as isolated, frail seniors, and those who are homeless. Plans are put in place during these alerts that include water distribution on the downtown streets and in the parks, establishment of cooling centers in large indoor public spaces, and transportation support to shelters. Committee members debrief at the end of each summer to evaluate the effectiveness of the planned responses and plan for the upcoming year accordingly.

Registered Nurses Association of Ontario- Region 6 Executive: This committee recently worked to host a screening of the documentary Poor No More followed by a discussion and exhibit of various social justice organizations. The event which was extremely well attended was open to nurses and community members and raised awareness of possible solutions to poverty in Canada.

Hunger Inquiry Coalition: As a response to the lack of sufficient food, especially food that provides a balanced diet, a Coalition made up of social service agencies from across the City as well as concerned individuals, is currently organizing a "Hunger Inquiry". In late November of this year, a panel of prominent citizens, with an association to food in some respect, will hear personal stories told by people who have directly experienced long term shortages of food. Based on the "evidence" heard, the panel will formulate recommendations directed at policy makers at all levels of government. A final report on the proceedings will be widely distributed early in the new year (2011) to raise public awareness of the issues related to food insecurity and hopefully influence policy change to the benefit of those who experience hunger.

The Homelessness & Palliative Care Committee: The committee consists of health professionals from a variety of disciplines who provide care to people who are homeless and at the end of their life. The committee collaborates with the Toronto Palliative Care Network to ensure that the complex and varying needs of homeless persons are met. A major focus of the committee is to promote discussion between homeless and palliative care providers in order to educate each other on the issues, challenges and best practices in regards to end of life care for those who are homeless and otherwise marginalized.

The Community Justice Coalition: The Coalition consists of approximately 100 people from various walks of life who are attempting to influence elected MPs about the consequences (human and financial) associated with the current government's "law and order" agenda.

SPRING BBQ

This past June, when the warmer weather finally arrived, Street Health decided to celebrate! Together with our generous friends at Enbridge Gas Distribution and Pillars Meats, we welcomed summer to the Dundas and Sherbourne neighbourhood by hosting a fun-filled community barbeque for all of our clients and friends.

Hundreds of people came out to the parking lot outside of our offices at 338 Dundas Street to enjoy time with friends, great music, and of course, a delicious, free lunch! Volunteers and staff served tasty sausage on a bun and cold drinks to many hungry attendees. Over 800 sausages and 200 veggie dogs were served!



It was a wonderful day for the Street Health family. We sincerely enjoyed the opportunity to re-connect with the neighbourhood after a cold, harsh winter; as well as to show our gratitude for 24 years of supporting and trusting Street Health. Thank you so much to our sponsors the Enbridge Special Events team, and Pillars Meats. We hope to make this an annual event!

A GREAT SUMMER AT THE BALL PARK FOR STREET HEALTH!

The Street Health baseball team are members of the Downtown East End Softball League (DEESL), coordinated by The City of Toronto Parks and Recreation Department. Since the league is specifically for homeless individuals, a variety of physical and mental disabilities are anticipated. Physical fitness is not a requirement and accommodations are made so that everyone has an opportunity to get involved. The league provides a positive element in the lives of street involved people that they would otherwise not have. Weekly games give people the opportunity to engage in team building activities and develop important social skills. Games teach people structure and rules, which can be transferred into their personal lives.

On Sunday, September 26th, 2010 the Street Health baseball team attended a rousing Blue Jays Game at the Rogers Centre. It was a great day at the park! Our gang from Street Health enjoyed an exciting game against the Baltimore Orioles, which included Oriole heavyweight Jose Bautista, being hit not once, but twice by pitches from Blue Jay, Shaun Marcum. The game ended in a 5-2 win for the Jays!

This year our team finished strong, in 6th place overall in regular season play, but were eliminated in the second round of playoffs. A tremendous effort was made by all! The team is always in need of gently used equipment. If you would like to make a contribution please contact Lennox at lennox@streethealth.ca

ATTENTION DONORS!

Street Health is "Going Green"! As part of this campaign we would like to offer our donors the opportunity to begin receiving their Bi-Annual newsletter by email.

IT'S EASY TO SWITCH!

Just email info@streethealth.ca and let us know. Our goal is to switch 30% of our donors to an E-Newsletter by the end of the year for a savings of over \$2000. Any savings will go towards our much needed programs and services. Join the movement!



Fundraising and Development Manager, Amanda Robertson recently accepted a donation of \$10,000 from the Greater Toronto Apartment Association at their annual general meeting held at the Liberty Grand.

STREET HEALTH RECEIVES A GENEROUS DONATION!

On Thursday, October 21st Street Health attended an awards ceremony at the Liberty Grand. The prestigious event was held for recipients of the 2010 Greater Toronto Apartment Association Grants Program. Street Health was generously awarded \$10,000.00 to help fund our Nursing and Outreach Programs. Our deepest gratitude to the GTAA for your continued support of Street Health, THANK YOU!

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 Program.

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

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STREET HEALTH'S current board members include:

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