



CENTRE FOR
Urban Health
INITIATIVES

Notable News

Spring 2006

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Welcome...

By Jennifer Butters, Director of Research

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Dear CUHI Members,

As we anticipate the Summer I hope that you will enjoy this latest edition of Notable News. It was a busy Winter for CUHI and we are looking forward to the warmer months that lie ahead.

As many of you know, I will be leaving the Centre in May to start my maternity leave and Galen will also be embarking on a new adventure as of May 31st. The Centre is being left in the most capable hands of Brenda Ross, who will fill my role for the coming year, and Alexis Kane Speer who will take over for Galen as the Centre Coordinator. I know you will join me in welcoming them to the Centre for Urban Health Initiatives.

In all of her various roles, Galen has made an outstanding contribution to CUHI. Her enthusiasm, efficiency, and creativity has stimulated the development of many exciting new initiatives and her work on various research projects has fostered their development and grant success. On behalf of all of us associated with Centre, thank you Galen for all you have done and we wish you all the very best.

As you will see in the following pages the Centre has enjoyed grant success and is particularly excited about the launch of our Community Based Research Seed Grant Program and the inaugural Community Based Research Award of Merit. Many interesting events are planned for the coming months and we hope you will be able to participate in them with us.

With warmest regards,

Jennifer
Director of Research

INTRODUCTIONS

Welcome to CUHI, we are thrilled to have you as part of our team!

Brenda Ross: Acting Director of Research

Brenda is a health professional with a Masters of Science degree and additional training in research and program evaluation. She has worked as a researcher/evaluator in a number of health arenas including policy settings, prevention and health promotion programs, community programs, hospitals and professional regulating bodies. Brenda also has strategic and operational policy experience with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and Toronto Public Health. Her main focus in recent years has been healthy child development. Brenda's 20 years of experience and strong leadership skills will continue to move CUHI forward in the coming year.

Alexis Kane Speer: Centre Coordinator

Alexis joins CUHI as the new Centre Coordinator with an Honours degree from the University of Toronto. She recently completed a double major in Urban Studies and Sociology with a Geography minor. Alexis brings to CUHI a solid background in Urban Health Research drawn from her experiences as a Research Assistant and Project Leader with Community University Research Alliance, the Centre for Social Innovation and the Centre for Urban and Community Studies. Having previously worked for CUHI as a summer student in 2005, Alexis is already familiar with the centre and will do an outstanding job as our new Centre Coordinator!

Wendy Mendes: Post-Doctoral Fellow

Wendy Mendes is an urban geographer with research interests that combine insights from urban and social geography, urban planning, sustainable development and policy-oriented literatures. Her dissertation on food policy and local governance in Vancouver has been nominated for two national awards. Dr. Mendes is a practicing Social Planner for the City of Vancouver where she continues to be intensively involved with the development and implementation of the City's evolving food policy mandate. Her work extends to the international arena including an on-going association with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Ottawa. In July 2006, Wendy will begin her tenure as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for Urban Health Initiatives and we are delighted to have her as part of our research team!

RESEARCH GRANTS AWARDED

SSHRC Strategic Joint Initiative Grant: Multicultural Issues in Canada Program

The Multicultural Issues in Canada Program supports research on diverse issues that arise out of Canada's increasingly multicultural and multiethnic population. CUHI is pleased to announce that members of the CUHI seed grant project, *Pesticide Use Reduction Evaluation* (Food and Health Research Interest Group) submitted a successful application for the October 2005 grant call.

Title:

Enhancing Environmental Protection in a Multicultural City

Principal Investigator:

Sarah Wakefield, *Department of Geography, University of Toronto*

Project Team:

Jamie Baxter, *Department of Geography, University of Western Ontario*

Donald Cole, *Department of Public Health Science, University of Toronto*

Loren Vanderlinden, *Toronto Public Health*

Monica Bienefeld, *Toronto Public Health*

Partners:

Future Watch

Toronto Chinese Environmental Ambassadors

Toronto Public Health Department

Abstract:

Governments across Canada must communicate with and defend the rights of ethno-cultural minorities. A new CUHI research project will explore the issues faced by governments in forming environmental health protection policies and programs in a multicultural municipal context. As a case study, this project will assess the effectiveness of the City of Toronto's pesticide use reduction program's communication and by-law enforcement campaigns among Toronto's diverse ethnic communities. By extension, it will investigate whether the City is protecting public health to varying degrees across different communities.

This project is a multi-disciplinary partnership among Toronto Public Health, the University of Toronto, the University of Waterloo, and local organizations. This team will explore how ethno-cultural groups receive, interpret and respond to information and outreach campaigns about pesticide use reduction by focusing on two groups with large populations in the Toronto area, Spanish-speakers and Cantonese or Mandarin-speakers with origins in mainland China.

This research will help identify the extent to which a wide range of policies and communication strategies may overcome implicit assumptions about cultural homogeneity and the translatability of ideas across cultures. The specific results from the case example will be used by Toronto Public Health to hone its outreach on environmental health issues and to lay the groundwork for future culturally-relevant health promotion strategies. While the case study focuses on Toronto, the findings should provide broader insights into environmental and public health policy making, where the long-term goal is the protection of the health of all Canadians.

RESEARCH GRANTS AWARDED cont'd.

Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research Grant Population Health Investigator Award

Established by the Government of Alberta in 1980, the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (AHFMR) supports biomedical and health research at Alberta universities, affiliated institutions, and other medical and technology-related institutions. The Heritage Population Health Investigator (PHI) Award allows independent investigators in the early stages of their careers in health research to commit the majority of their time to research. CUHI is pleased to announce that Nicholas Holt (Neighbourhoods and Health Research Interest Group) submitted a successful application for this grant call.

Title:

Enhancing Positive Youth Development Through Physical Activity and Sport

Principal Investigator:

Nicholas Holt, *Dept. of Physical Education and Health, University of Alberta*

Abstract:

Canadian children need to spend their leisure time being more physically active and engaged in activities that will contribute to their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. Sport participation remains something of a 'black box' and we know little about what youth experience and how development occurs in these settings. This gap in the literature means that there is insufficient guidance regarding how to best teach Positive Youth Development (PYD) through sport. If sport is to be successfully used to promote development, researchers must examine the processes and practices associated with producing positive development in this context. The current research program will help fill this void by first examining processes associated with PYD in sport, and by then manipulating sport contexts to facilitate positive change.

The overall objective of this research program is to improve the delivery of sport opportunities so as to facilitate their use in promoting PYD. A mixed-methods (qualitative and quantitative) approach will be used based on a collaborative, participatory framework that will integrate the views of identified key agents (i.e., children, parents, coaches, and sport governing bodies).

COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH AT CUHI

CUHI is committed to supporting research that privileges community input and whose outcomes have community and policy relevance. To this end, the Centre has adopted two new initiatives that focus on community based research:

i. Community Based Research Seed Grant Program

The Centre's CBR Seed Grant Research Program provides support for initiatives that will facilitate securing further research funding. Last winter, CUHI released its first CBR Seed Grant call for proposals to support the development of a community based research initiative in the Farm to School Movement. Farm to School programs, primarily operating in the United States, connect schools with local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing health and nutrition education opportunities that will last a lifetime, and supporting local small farmers.

Seed Grant Project Title:

Researching Local Farm to School Possibilities

Principal Applicant:

Debbie Field, *Executive Director, FoodShare Toronto*

Wally Seccombe, *Visiting Scholar, Department of Sociology in Education, OISE*

Abstract:

This research project is being led by a variety of community and academic partners including: Everdale Environmental Learning Centre, Field To Table Schools, Food Secure Canada, FoodShare Toronto, Green Thumbs/Growing Kids, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Ryerson University, Social Studies and Humanities/Family Studies at the Toronto District School Board, University of Guelph, and York University.

The goals of this project are:

1. To review Farm to School and related food programs in the schools.
2. To review Ontario curricula and teaching resources related to food to integrate food programs with the existing curriculum and promote a stronger presence of quality food education in Ministry of Education guidelines.
3. To conduct preliminary research in a few local communities on receptivity and resistance to various kinds of food.
4. To interview key political players on their receptivity and resistance to various kinds of food programs and the funding needed to sustain them.
5. To review survey research on public attitudes towards food education and school-aged kids' eating patterns, with a view to understanding how best to strengthen quality food programs in our schools.

ii. Community Based Research Award of Merit

The Centre for Urban Health Initiatives and the Wellesley Central Health Corporation, in partnership with University College at the University of Toronto, are pleased to have established a Community Based Research Award of Merit that will recognize Principal Investigators, and their project teams, who have demonstrated exemplary academic participation in the field of community based research.

The first, annual Call for Nominations was released this February, 2006. Excellent nominations were received yielding a tight competition, and representing the outstanding Community Based Research underway across the Greater Toronto Area. The award recipient and top two nominations were recognized for their



~Award Recipient~

Dr. Winston Husbands, AIDS Committee of Toronto
Party Drugs in Toronto's Gay Dance Club Scene:
Issues for HIV Prevention for Gay Men

As the director of research at the AIDS Committee of Toronto, Dr Husbands has initiated the ACT Research Day as a forum for researchers and frontline staff at ASOs to discuss the implications for the development and improvement of HIV related programs, services, policy & advocacy. He continually demonstrates his commitment to community health by helping to unite, strengthen and empower the AIDS community through research, advocacy and improvement of practice. He has spearheaded a number of important CBR initiatives - including research related to *HIV Stigma & Discrimination Among African & Caribbean People living with HIV*, *Rejuvenating HIV Prevention for Gay & Bisexual Men* and *Party Drugs in Toronto's Gay Dance Club Scene*. Winston is committed to community forums for dissemination and has taken an active and creative role in ensuring that community members learn and benefit from research.

RECENT SPECIAL EVENTS

Policy Workshop, March 22, 2006:

Communicating Research to Publics and Policy Makers

Judith Maxwell, *Founding President and Research Fellow, Canadian Policy Research Networks*

Mike Gasher, *Associate Professor, Department of Journalism at Concordia University*

Paul Muldoon, *Executive Director, Canadian Environmental Law Association*

The next generation of researchers is being called on to communicate their results in a context that is much larger than the traditional ivory tower, but what this means in practice is not always clear. The Centre for Urban Health Initiatives and the Wellesley Central Health Corporation hosted a policy workshop on March 22, 2006 to address this issue. The workshop initiated conversation about successful strategies for communicating research to the public and policy makers with presentations from three expert panelists.

A summary report available free of charge. Contact the Centre Coordinator at cuhi.admin@utoronto.ca or visit our website at www.cuhi.utoronto.ca.

Distinguished Speaker Event, February 20, 2006:

Health and the Environment of Child Poverty

Dr. Gary Evans, *Professor of Environmental Design and Human Development, Cornell University*

Abstract

Although there is abundant evidence that poverty is inimical to healthy child development, much less is known about why this is so. This talk examines the proposition that a unique and key aspect of childhood poverty is exposure to the accumulation of physical and social risk factors. The confluence of risk may be an important, underlying explanation for why poverty is bad for children.

For a report on the event topic, contact Dr. Gary Evans directly at gwe1@cornell.edu

Recent Research Dissemination Opportunities

CUHI Presence at Community Events

CUHI's Community Intern, Carolin Taron, has continued to represent CUHI to community groups throughout the city. She recently shared findings from the Urban Gardening Research Opportunities Working Group project, and collected requests for the final project report, at two community events:

Toronto's Annual Seedy Saturday (March 18, 2006)

Regent Park Community Health Centre's Seed Exchange (April 26, 2006)

UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EVENTS

SPOTLIGHT ON URBAN HEALTH SEMINAR SERIES

Visit www.cuhi.utoronto.ca for more information.

October 4, 2006, Wednesday (1:10-2:10pm)
University College, Rm. TBA, University of Toronto
Patricia O'Campo (PhD), Director, Centre for Research on Inner City Health (St. Michael's Hospital)

November 1, 2006, Wednesday (1:10-2:10pm)
University College, Rm. TBA, University of Toronto
CBR Award of Merit Recipient: Winston Husbands (PhD),
AIDS Committee of Toronto

December 6, 2006, Wednesday (1:10-2:10pm)
University College, Rm. TBA, University of Toronto
Patricia Erickson (PhD), Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Policy, Director International Graduate School, Oxford
University Centre for the Environment

CONFERENCES OF INTEREST

May 31 - June 3, 2006
Community Campus Partnerships for Health's
9th Annual Conference
Walking the talk: Achieving the Promise of Authentic Partnerships
Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A

October 7 - 11, 2006
10th Annual Conference of the Community Food Security Coalition in conjunction with Food Secure Canada
Bridging Borders Toward Food Security
Vancouver, Canada

October 26 - 28, 2006
5th International Conference on Urban Health
Population Mobility and Its Effect on Urban Health
Amsterdam, The Netherlands



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April 11 - 14, 2007

Community Campus-Partnerships for Health,
10th Anniversary Conference
Toronto, Canada

INTERACTIVE SKILLS-BUILDING INSTITUTE

July 27 - 30, 2006

Canadian Community-Based Research Skill-Building
Institute for Partnership Teams
Barrie, ON, Canada

Applications due **May 5, 2006**

www.wellesleycentral.com/cbrinstitute.csp

WELLESLEY CENTRAL HEALTH CORPORATION

May 18, 2006, Thursday (9:00am-12:00pm)

Seminar: Funding CBR in Toronto and Beyond

Panelists Include:

Sarah Flicker - *Wellesley Central*

William Lau - *The Ontario HIV Treatment Network*

Diane Dyson - *United Way of Greater Toronto*

Collette Naubert - *The Ontario Trillium Foundation*

Patrick Tobin - *Canadian Heritage*

Location: Metro Central YMCA (20 Grosvenor St. Toronto)

Register at: www.wellesleycentral.com

Join this panel of funders to hear what we have learned from funding community-based research to date and what we are looking for in future applications.

Keep an eye out...

...The Food and Health Research Group is expecting to release a RIG newsletter that will highlight RIG specific activities.

Please advise the Centre Coordinator at cuhi.admin@utoronto.ca if you would like to receive a copy.