



CENTRE FOR
Urban Health
INITIATIVES



Spring Newsletter 08

Bringing together researchers, policy makers and the community to support urban health research development.

Notable News

In this spring issue of Notable News, we are delighted to bring you updates on our activities and accomplishments. Spring has been a time of growth for CUHI. We are pleased to announce two new Research Interest Groups (RIGs): Socio-ecological Strategies for Prevention and Management of Chronic Disease and Sex in the City: Urban Youth and the Social Determinants of Sexual Health. We are also pleased to announce five new Seed Grant awards within these new RIGs. You will find more information on these projects inside. CUHI welcomes our new research associates and their community and policy partners.

New research development was not the only thing keeping us busy this past winter. We were pleased to submit our Centres for Research Development midterm evaluation report. This report highlights activities of interdisciplinary research development, collaboration with community and policy partners, training and mentoring of students and knowledge exchange since the inception of the centre. Our stakeholders have been impressed by our accomplishments thus far and have you, our research associates and partners, to thank.

CUHI supports research development activities that contribute to the submission and award of external grants. Since the spring of 2007, 30 CIHR grants have been awarded to 17 principal investigators who are CUHI research associates. In the past year, there have also been other grant successes with SSHRC and Heart & Stroke Foundation. Congratulations to those who have received external funding and have grant submissions in progress. CUHI will continue to make funding opportunities known and to support research development leading to grant submissions.

While we are sad to see our Community Intern, LoAn Ta Young, go, we are delighted to receive her report on the Youth Community Health Needs Assessment. In the past year, LoAn conducted a photovoice project, focus group and youth survey in collaboration with a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) composed of

high school students from Parkdale Collegiate. This community internship is one of the ways that CUHI provides research capacity-building opportunities to community members. We would like to thank Parkdale Community Health Centre for collaborating on this project.

CUHI continues to provide research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students from a range of disciplines. In this issue you will read about the projects of two graduate students placed with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. One project focused on built environments and physical activity and the other explored the health benefits of community gardens. We continue to place students both within our research centre (two of which you will hear from) and in the community so that they may gain research experience. In this issue, you can also read an update on the accomplished work of Wendy Mendes, our post-doctoral fellow.

We have also provided updates from two of our 2007 Seed Grant projects: "Exploring Food Security with Young Aboriginal Moms" (Cyndy Baskin, Ryerson University) and "The Role of the 'Third Place' in Community Health and Well-Being" (Patricia Manuel, Dalhousie University). Seven CUHI supported project teams presented in our 07/08 *Spotlight on Urban Health* seminar series, where we experienced a record attendance from academics, policy-makers and community members.

In closing we would like to encourage you to re-visit our website (www.cuhi.utoronto.ca) for updates such as upcoming forums, training opportunities, release of reports, research funding opportunities and more recently the expansion of RIGs and their associated seed grant projects. Also stay tuned to our website for the announcement of our Annual Community Based Research Award of Merit recipient as nominations are currently under review.

Sincerely,
Brenda Ross, Director of Research
Alexis Kane Speer, Centre Co-ordinator

New Research Interest Groups

Urban Youth & the Determinants of Sexual Health

WHY A RIG ON YOUTH AND SEXUAL HEALTH? Due to a number of biological, social, developmental, and behavioural factors, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) disproportionately affect adolescents. Recent data indicate a resurgence of STIs in this population, along with an increase in the reported number of HIV infections. Research indicates that Canadian youth lack comprehensive knowledge of risk factors associated with unprotected sexual activity and the necessary skills required to ensure the protection of their sexual health. The early teen years are a critical time to provide youth with accessible sexual health education and prevention services.

Toronto, often referred to as the world's most ethnically-diverse city, is home to more than 80 ethnic groups, speaking over 100 different languages. Nearly a quarter of Toronto youth are living at or below the poverty line and racialized groups are disproportionately poor. Local, as well as global research, indicates that HIV follows patterns of inequity with marginalized groups most at risk. In the context of such diverse populations, 'one size fits all' STI and HIV/AIDS prevention strategies have proven ineffective in increasing knowledge and changing behaviour among youth. As Toronto's population continues to rapidly grow and diversify, its youth communities will continue to increase in their diversity, and the associated challenges and risks will also become more complex.

Generic STI and HIV/AIDS prevention programs targeted at youth, but focussed solely on behavioural change, are often unsuccessful because youth in different communities approach their health differently. Systemic issues of poverty, racism, sexism and homophobia shape and constrain risk. While service providers and youth identify many of the same sexual health issues, they often differ in what they consider ideal approaches to these concerns. As a result, the strategies used by health promoters in public health and community-based organizations must be adapted in order to provide culturally effective health promotion and prevention services.

WHAT KEY THEMES WILL BE EXPLORED?

- HIV/AIDS prevention, sexual health and harm reduction
- Intersectional approaches to equity and the social determinants of adolescent sexual health
- Exploring the impact of sexual diversity on health
- Improving youth access to sexual health services/education
- Participatory methodologies that promote youth involvement, leadership and community development
- Leveraging youth media for sexual health promotion

BUILDING ON STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES: Toronto is already a hub of adolescent sexual health programming and is rapidly becoming a centre for related research. This RIG will bring together youth, community based service providers, policy makers, students and researchers from a variety of institutions and disciplines to develop and promote research

capacity in this area. It will build on the interactions of several ongoing as well as new and emerging research projects in adolescent sexual health.

HOW WILL STUDENTS BE INVOLVED? Training and mentoring of students is at the core of this RIG. The Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention (GAAP), a youth advisory board made up of undergraduate and high school students, has been active in critiquing public health campaigns, developing performed ethnographies, conducting photo-voice projects and generally taking an activist role in developing innovative sexual health promotion media. The GAAP board will continue to be a way to engage students in RIG activities. Furthermore, through the Toronto Teen Survey, we have developed successful models of taking on undergraduate and graduate student interns and research assistants. We will also begin a monthly journal club, giving students engaged in the RIG an opportunity for collective feedback and mentorship.

HOW WILL WE SHARE OUR WORK? Knowledge translation and exchange (KTE) strategies are an important component of this community-based research programme. A communications plan targeted at youth will be developed to attract the attention of local print-based media, including newspapers, websites, teen magazines, and radio. Findings from our research projects will be presented at community workshops to assist in data analysis and as opportunities for dissemination. We will present our research at key conferences as well as organize public consultations and meetings with elected officials and service providers.

RIG Investigators

- Sarah Flicker, (Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University)
- June Larkin, (Institute for Women & Gender Studies, University of Toronto)
- Claudia Mitchell, (Faculty of Education, McGill University)
- Crystal Layne, (Planned Parenthood of Toronto)
- Denise Nepveux, (Critical Disability Studies, York University)
- Hazelle Palmer, (Planned Parenthood of Toronto)
- Jason Pole, (Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto)
- Jeannette Doucet, (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada)
- Jean-Paul Restoule, (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto)
- Melanie Rivers, (Chee Mamuk, Aboriginal Program, British Columbia Centre for Disease Control)
- Michaela Hynie, (Psychology, York University)
- Randy Jackson, (Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network)
- Robb Travers, (Ontario HIV Treatment Centre)
- Stephanie Nixon, (Physiotherapy, University of Toronto)
- Susan Flynn, (Planned Parenthood of Toronto)
- Tara Goldstein (OISE, University of Toronto)
- Tracey Prentice, (Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network)
- Trevor Hart, (Psychology, Ryerson University)

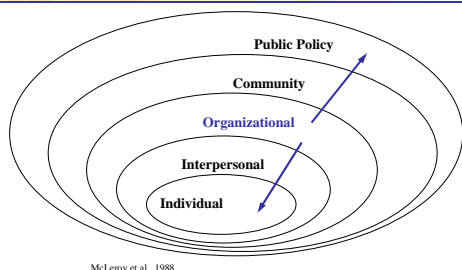
New Research Interest Groups

Socio-ecological Strategies for Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

Canadian policymakers have identified a need for supportive social infrastructures and safe, healthy communities that may prevent the development of chronic diseases and improve the quality of life of individuals with chronic disease. This RIG seeks to clarify how to promote environments that support healthy living, how to develop strong links among community action groups and the academic community, and how to improve population-level outcomes by addressing the social determinants of health. Our five research themes are as follows: The built environment; ethnicity and chronic disease management and prevention; health literacy; knowledge dissemination and translation; and new roles and interprofessional/ intersectoral models of practice that will meet population health needs.

Our interdisciplinary research program is based on the socio-ecological theory of health promotion developed by McLeroy et al. (see Figure 1), which postulates that health-related behaviours are determined by five categories of factors. The model predicts that efforts focused exclusively on the individual, at the expense of other factors are likely to fail. Thus, efforts to improve individuals' health must be simultaneously directed at multiple levels. We suggest that the adoption of this broader socio-ecologic framework is required to underpin research and practice by acknowledging multiple influences on health behaviour, including local physical and social environments.

Figure 1. Social Ecologic Theory of Health Promotion



McLeroy et al., 1988

McLeroy KR, Bibeau D, Steckler A, Glanz K. An ecological perspective on health promotion programs. *Health Education Quarterly* 1988 Winter; 15(4):351-77.

In addition to research and partnership building, a primary goal of the RIG will be the establishment of an accessible training program on chronic disease prevention and management which will build on RIG members' national and international links with experienced academics. Our training will incorporate Ryerson University's expertise in providing continuing education to community and policy stakeholders engaged in serving vulnerable populations.

RIG Investigators

- Enza Gucciardi, (School of Nutrition, Ryerson University)
- Wendy Young (Health Services Management, Ryerson University)
- Guy Faulkner (Physical Education & Health, U of T)
- Tony Cohn (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health)
- Heather Beanlands (School of Nursing, Ryerson University)
- Margaret S. Zanchetta, (School of Nursing, Ryerson University)
- Dr. Maureen Dobbins (School of Nursing, McMaster University)
- Dr. Ron Buliung (Geography, U of T at Mississauga)
- Souraya Sidani (School of Nursing, Ryerson University)

RIG Research Project Titles

- Developing and Testing an Innovative Methodology to Evaluate Community Capacity Building and Action:
- Healthy Weights: Halton Takes Action
- Evaluation of the implementation of the Blue Print for Action of the Halton Active Living Network (HALNet)
- Cultural/Racial Differences in Diabetes Preventative Care Practices in Canada
- Food Insecurity in Canadians with Diabetes Mellitus
- The Development of an Intervention to Promote Psychological Wellbeing Across Three Distinct Illness Populations
- Families of Diverse Ethno-cultural Backgrounds Living in a Minority Linguistic Context: Exploring the Construction of Families' Health Literacy
- Cultural and Gender Perspectives about Self-monitoring of Blood Glucose in Non-insulin or Non-anti-glycemic treated Individuals with Diabetes
- Effective Delivery of Diabetes Self-management Education Programs
- The Development of a Community-Designed Diabetes Self-Management Education Program for Women of Colour
- Built Environment and Active Transportation
- Broadband Technology and Metropolitan Sustainability
- Aging at Home
- Dissecting the 'obesogenic' environment of CAMH service users: Clients' perspectives

Results of our work will be disseminated broadly to decision-makers and clinicians through meetings, reports, forums, community workshops, and professional organizations. The Centre for Health in at Risk Populations (CHIRP) at Ryerson University is also interested in providing venues for various dissemination activities. We will also use traditional methods of knowledge transfer, including hospital and university rounds, national and international conferences, and journal publications.

Announcement of Seed Grant Awards May 2008

CUHI's seed grant program supports investigators within the research interest groups by providing seed funding for projects in their development stage that will form the basis of future grant applications. All seed grant applications undergo peer review by external reviewers and by members of our Research Advisory Committee (see last page of newsletter for a list of reviewers). The following projects have been awarded a 2008 CUHI Research Interest Group Seed Grant:

Urban Youth and the Social Determinants of Health RIG

1. "Youth, Disability and Sexual Health"

Sarah Flicker (Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University), Stephanie Nixon (Department of Physical Therapy, University of Toronto) & Marcia Rioux (School of Health Policy and Management, York University)

This study aims to address the lack of research on HIV prevention needs of youth with disabilities by examining vulnerabilities to HIV and identifying methods for effectively delivering HIV prevention strategies to this population. Youth with disabilities share a staggering list of interrelated risk factors that may place them at increased vulnerability to HIV including: increased poverty, lower educational levels, lower access to HIV prevention information, precarious access to HIV-related healthcare, greater engagement in behaviours conducive to sexual risk taking such as alcohol or drug use prior to sex and lack of condom use, higher rates of adolescent STDs and pregnancies, higher substance use and abuse, and elevated risk for sexual assault. To explore these concerns, the study will recruit a group of eight young people who reflect a diversity of experience around disability, impairment, gender and sexuality. An arts-based approach to participatory action research will be used to engage youth in HIV leadership, in which photography technology will be used to visually represent community health issues and create action plans for change.

2. "Performed Ethnography, HIV/AIDS & Aboriginal Youth"

June Larkin (The Women and Gender Studies Institute (WGSi), University of Toronto), Jean-Paul Restoule (OISE, University of Toronto), Claudia Mitchell (Faculty of Education, McGill University)

This project supports an innovative knowledge dissemination strategy for research on HIV/AIDS and Aboriginal youth. The project will involve Aboriginal youth in a performed ethnography project designed to turn data from a previous study on HIV/AIDS and Aboriginal youth into scripts and discussion questions that can be used to educate both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. An evaluation tool will be developed to assess the effectiveness of the scripts as a knowledge dissemination strategy. The performed ethnography and evaluation tool will be piloted with Aboriginal youth and non-Aboriginal youth.

Socio-ecological Strategies for Chronic Disease Prevention and Management RIG

1. "Dissecting the 'Obesogenic' Environment of CAMH Service Users: Clients' Perspectives"

Guy Faulkner (University of Toronto), Paul Gorczynski (University of Toronto), Wendy Young (Ryerson University)

This study offers a unique portrayal of the social lives of individuals with schizophrenia and their struggles with obesity in a unique manner that is culturally sensitive and feasible. Interviews and focus groups with CAMH clients and survivors will seek to examine environmental factors in and around CAMH (Queen Street Facility) that may influence diet and physical activity in the inpatient housing setting; assess perceptions of community and safety around the facility; and create participant oriented and directed interventions that promote healthy lifestyles of clients.

2. "The Development of a Community-Designed Diabetes Self-Management Education Program for Women of Colour"

Enza Gucciardi (School of Nutrition, Ryerson University)

This study aims to develop and implement more effective diabetes self-management education (DSME) programs for women of colour. This study will use systematic literature review methodology to examine common barriers of women with Type II Diabetes Mellitus who have a Black African/Caribbean, Latin American or South Asian ethnic background.

Neighbourhood and Health RIG

1. "Building Community Health Mapping Tools to Investigate and Reduce Racialized Health Disparities Within and Across Neighborhoods in Toronto"

Dianne Patychuk & Yogendra Shakya (Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services)

The key goal of this pilot project is to build capacity of community health centres (CHCs) and their community partners in developing and utilizing community mapping tools for evidence-based service planning and advocacy work geared at reducing racialized health disparities. In particular, the project will create and evaluate three types of community mapping tools: 1) simple, user defined maps; 2) multi-criteria map-based decision tools; 3) qualitative community mapping/audit methods.

Other seed grant awards will be announced soon so stay tuned to our website, www.cuhi.utoronto.ca.

Training and Mentoring of Students

Pelin Kaya (4th Year Student, Human Biology and Bioethics, University of Toronto)

I was hired as a work-study student at the Centre for Urban Health Initiatives (CUHI) for the 2007/2008 school year. I was first attracted to the Centre due to my interest in food security as a social determinant of health. However, during my time here, my interests have expanded into urban health in neighbourhoods and physical environments. Fortunately, my time at CUHI has allowed me to gain insight into current research projects on the above topics.

The administrative and research skills I have acquired at CUHI will aid me as I pursue post-graduate studies and participation in the workforce. Some of my tasks at CUHI included assisting with the centre's evaluation, updating the Members List, organizing the fall newsletter, researching potential organizations for relevant seminars, and promoting the monthly seminar series. My experience at CUHI has not only been educational but also very enjoyable. Brenda and Alexis have been nothing but helpful and supportive. I am very grateful for the opportunity to have worked for CUHI, as I have gained so much from the experience.

Nuangi Wickramasuriya (4th Year Student, Human Biology, Physiology & Psychology)

My experience while working at CUHI has been very rewarding and has facilitated the gain of knowledge and skills that will be most valuable to me as I pursue graduate studies in public health. Exposure to the centre's involvement with research development, collaboration, and knowledge exchange between researchers and organizations committed to urban health has demonstrated to me the importance of research in its ability to foster increased awareness of issues pertinent to health as well as to take steps toward effecting change in policy.

In assisting with efforts to produce the centre's newsletters and evaluation report, I appreciate the great breadth of research projects that CUHI supports as well as the truly multidisciplinary approach taken in addressing urban health issues. Other administrative duties that I was responsible for included investigating research funding opportunities, updating the listserv, and assisting with CUHI's seminar series. Overall, my time with CUHI has been everything I had hoped for and more. Alexis, Brenda, LoAn and Pelin have been very supportive and wonderful to work alongside. I will most definitely take this experience forward in my educational career and beyond.

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Toronto

Physical Activity and the Living City Prince Sibanda (M.A. Student, School of Urban & Regional Planning, Queen's University)

This project explored the linkages between physical activity and the built environment, specifically recreation and open space, through a review of largely cross-sectional studies. In contrast to the well-documented causal connection between

physical activity and health, the role of the built environment in offering opportunities for physical activity is a relatively new area of inquiry encompassing a growing divergence of views on the built environment's effect on health. An analysis of the available body of knowledge yielded recommendations to develop a sound theoretical framework, address knowledge gaps, and use current knowledge to create enabling environments. The report outlines potential areas for future research and supports a multi-sectoral approach that addresses individual, social and environmental determinants of physical activity behaviour of which the TRCA could play a complementary role. Modifications to the built environment alone are unlikely to solve the public health problem of insufficient physical activity.

The Health Benefits of Community Gardens Benita Tam (Department of Geography & Planning, University of Toronto)

This study, in conjunction with the TRCA's Watershed Planning Group seeks to examine the health benefits as well as impacts of implementing urban gardens in the GTA. Through a review of literature, community gardens are found to provide an extensive range of physical, mental and social health benefits to local residents and whole communities. Local gardens promote physical activity, consumption of fresh foods as well as ameliorate social settings by building stronger communities, integrating different cultures in the neighbourhoods, reducing local crime rates, and providing greater resources for low-income families. Implementing public gardens in the GTA would greatly benefit all types of neighbourhoods. They may be of great significance to vulnerable subpopulations with low-income housing, higher rates of obesity (or diabetes), and higher crime rates.

The Last Straw! A Board Game on the Social Determinants of Health – Now available for purchase (www.thelaststraw.ca)

CUHI has supported Kate Reeve (McMaster University Medical Student) and Kate Rossiter (University of Toronto Public Health Sciences Ph.D. student) for conference presentations on this innovative social determinants of health board game. The Last Straw! takes players through the life cycle where they will encounter "macro" issues such as political climate, economic structure and environmental change, as well as "micro" issues, such as individual finances, education, and family dynamics. CUHI will continue to support the training of facilitators as well as promote the game as a curriculum teaching tool on the social determinants of health.



2007 Seed Grant Updates

Which of the Following is NOT an Essential Service: Schools, Roads or Food Access? Exploring Food Security with Young Aboriginal Mothers

Cyndy Baskin, Bonnie Guarisco, Ruth Koleszar-Green, Nadya Melanson & Cheryl Osawamick (Ryerson University)

This research project conducted with young Aboriginal mothers in Toronto explored factors related to determinants of food choice and access; relationships between food insecurity, housing and child welfare; how food related policies affect mothers and their children, and the strengths and resiliency of these mothers.

Food security is defined as having access to enough culturally acceptable food that is nutritious and safe at all times. Although 54% of the total population of Aboriginal peoples in Canada live in urban centres and, of this group, 29% of children live with a lone mother (Statistics Canada, 2008), little research has focused specifically on these women and their children in the area of food security.

The research team implemented Aboriginal research methodology using storytelling circles, the creative making of an art mural and a secure website where women could provide information that they did not feel comfortable discussing in the circles. The research team members were all Aboriginal women, four were mothers and two of these four were young Aboriginal mothers who were, therefore, participants as well as researchers.



Research participants were invited to imagine, dream and create "a food secure Aboriginal community in Toronto" through a mural. They included in their painting an Aboriginal grocery store where traditional food to keep them healthy and strong could be purchased. Traditional vegetables and fruits such as corn and berries which are used in ceremonies and in everyday meals, and a community garden where they could grow foods and medicines were also included. Amanda Murray, a young Anishnawbe artist, facilitated the creation of the mural.

Key Findings:

- Foodbanks did not provide ingredients for healthy meals
- They frequently made bad food choices because they felt there were few other options
- Difficult to access traditional Aboriginal food in Toronto: these are tied to culture and have a psychological impact when they cannot be shared with their children
- Lack of a central united Aboriginal community in city (no neighbourhood)
- Aboriginal mothers have been educating themselves on the system and using other systems of support like each other



The findings from this project highlighted gaps in social services and policies, identified agencies and programs that are helpful, and offered recommendations to policy analysts to improve issues related to urban food security. Findings also revealed some of the many strengths of Aboriginal women.

The research team invites other Aboriginal researchers in the area of food security and related topics to contact us should they be interested in partnering on similar projects in urban centres and/or Aboriginal communities across Canada. Please contact Cyndy Baskin at cbaskin@ryerson.ca.



Post doctoral Research Fellow Update

The Role of 'Third Place' in Community Health and Well-Being

Dr. Patricia Manuel & Kate Thompson (School of Planning, Dalhousie University)

Over the past year, Dr. Patricia Manuel and research assistant Kate Thompson conducted a pilot study of haunts and hangouts in the Halifax neighbourhood of Spryfield and their role in community health and well-being. They wanted to better understand the places that bring people together and the importance of such places in peoples' experience of community health.

More formally known as 'third places', hangouts are the places we visit when we want to be with others without the commitment of too much effort, planning or organization. Popularized by Ray Oldenburg with his book "The Great Good Place", third place stands in contrast to the intimate home (first place) and the more formal work (second place) environments where we spend our private and productive time.

Dr. Manuel and Ms. Thompson became interested in the notion of 'third place' when their experience in Spryfield suggested a level of satisfaction with the community that seemed at odds with the socio-economic profile of the area. They wondered if and how social connectedness might be responsible for the sense of community well-being so often reported by Spryfield residents. Being community planners, they were curious about the physical spaces in which social connections are built and maintained.

The researchers used field observation and group interviews to explore the type, location, character, use and significance to the users of Spryfield's third places. Spryfield has many distinct residential neighbourhoods that connect to the 'main drag'. Its public and business venues are not centralized in an area that draws people together. Spryfield today has very few of the typical third places – pubs, bars, coffee shops and eateries – that feature so prominently in third place literature. The community doesn't lack third places, however, only the conventional ones that planners and community developers are more familiar with. People in Spryfield know how to adapt spaces for social purposes; and they define social spaces according to the attributes and traditions of the community. Results so far are pointing to places and experiences that derive from adaptation of existing assets (natural places and physical infrastructure such as streets, sidewalks, parking lots), self-organization (through volunteerism, long-term residency and allegiance to place) or opportunity seeking (joining a programmed activity more for the social connections than the program itself). These strategies to create and enjoy third places cannot be overlooked.

This research is broadening our understanding of third place diversity and also of the evolution of third places. Perhaps 'making' a third place (and how that happens) is as significant an experience of community as is participating in one. These findings will help to advance one of the research objectives to

operationalize the definition of third place of interest to planners and community developers. The researchers will continue to probe the physical qualities and social experiences of third places to understand the role of "third place" in community health and well-being.

CUHI Postdoctoral Research Fellow Update

Wendy Mendes, PhD

CUHI's support has enabled me to advance my research program on urban planning and governance responses to emerging social and environmental issues in cities, with a particular focus on food security. One result is the article: "Negotiating a place for 'sustainability' policies in municipal planning and governance: The role of scalar discourses and practices" published in *Space & Polity* (2007, 11:1). Two additional articles are forthcoming. One is: "Implementing social and environmental policies in cities: The case of food policy in Vancouver, Canada." The article has been accepted for publication in the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Another article, written with colleagues from Portland, Oregon (Amanda Rhoads and Kevin Balmer) and Vancouver, BC (Terra Kaethler), is called: "The role of urban agriculture in enhancing green communities: Experiences from Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, British Columbia." The article was presented at the American Planning Association (APA) meeting in Las Vegas in April 2008 and has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of the American Planning Association*.

In addition to expanding my own research program, the CUHI Fellowship has allowed me to establish productive research partnerships with Ryerson University's Centre for Studies in Food Security (CSFS). For instance, I played a significant role in a successful SSHRC-CURA letter of intent competition for a project entitled: "Partnerships in governance: The role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in advancing sustainable food security." This research will focus on models of governance for food security and the participation of CSOs in three cities: two in Brazil (Fortaleza and Belo Horizonte) and one in Canada (Toronto). Other CSFS collaborations include research with Dr. Cecilia Rocha that examines the role of inter-cultural competencies in enabling social policy innovations in cities. Another collaboration is with CSFS Associate, Dr. Joe Nasr on a paper entitled: "Preparing planners to address emerging planning issues: Reflections on teaching about urban food systems." This work was presented at the Meeting of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, in Baltimore, Maryland (March 2008) and will be submitted to *Journal of Planning Education and Research* shortly. Lastly, I am formalizing a research partnership with CSFS Associates Dr. Mustafa Koc and Dr. Ozlem Guclu-Ustundag on urban food security indicators.

Recent teaching activities include instruction of a fourth year undergraduate course in the Department of Geography at York University on "Planning of Urban Public Facilities," and co-instruction of a graduate seminar on food policy in the School

of Nutrition at Ryerson University. In July 2008 I will teach a graduate seminar in "Food Systems Policy and Planning" at the University of British Columbia's School of Community and Regional Planning where I have recently been appointed Adjunct Professor. In addition, I am currently co-designing the course: "Dimensions of Urban Agriculture" that I will teach with urban agriculture expert Dr. Diana Lee-Smith in Fall 2008 at Ryerson University.

In terms of recent service and volunteer activity, I enjoyed contributing as a reference group member for the "Access to Healthy Food for All" initiative of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario (2007). I was also a member of a faculty advisory group providing guidance to Architecture students at Ryerson University who included urban agriculture in their final projects. Currently, I am active as a community animator for Jane's Walk, a yearly two-day event dedicated to celebrating the life and work of the late Jane Jacobs by highlighting the people, places and public spaces that make our cities vibrant and unique.

Update from CUHI's 07/08 Community Intern

LoAn Ta-Young from Parkdale Community Health Centre

In an effort to increase the number of youth accessing the programs and services at Parkdale Community Health Centre (CHC), a needs assessment of youth ages 13-24 years living in Parkdale was implemented. The Health Centre wanted to identify the issues and gaps in services for youth, the best methods to outreach to youth, and the barriers youth may be facing in accessing centre services. A Youth Advisory Council (YAC) was formed to engage youth in the needs assessment. The needs assessment included a focus group with service providers, a photovoice project with youth and a youth survey. The photovoice project enabled the YAC to explore what health in their community means to them through the lens of a camera and photos. Using photos, they created fabulous posters to tell their stories. The youth were also involved in designing a short survey for their peers and they decided on the recruitment and data collection strategies for the survey. Seventy youth participated in the survey and the YAC participated in the analysis of results.

The youth health needs assessment is a community-university collaboration between CUHI and Parkdale CHC. Through my community internship, CUHI helped to build capacity for the Health Centre to conduct its own community-based research. Specifically, CUHI provided research training, knowledge transfer and resources in focus group and needs assessment methodology. CUHI also provided support and resources in the photovoice project with YAC. I think that this community intern experience validates that community-based research is

meaningful and can help decision-makers like Parkdale CHC in the planning and implementation of community programs. I am very pleased to share with you that Brenda and I presented at the Community-University Partnerships conference (CUexpo 2008) in Victoria in May.



Spring 2008 Reviewers

CUHI would like to sincerely thank our Research Advisory Committee and external reviewers who contributed their time and efforts to our 2008 RIG Seed Grant Competition. Without thoughtful and careful reviewers, we would not have an effective peer review process.

Research Advisory Committee

Anna Pancham (Toronto Public Health)
Audrey Smargiassi (Montreal Public Health)
Donald Cole (Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto)
Patricia Erickson (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health; Dept. of Sociology & Dept. of Criminology, University of Toronto)
Diane Dyson (United Way of Greater Toronto)
Erika Khandor (Street Health)
Brenda Roche (Wellesley Institute)
John Myles (Sociology, University of Toronto)

External Reviewers

Esther Ignagni (School of Disability Studies, Ryerson University)
Cyndy Baskin (Social Work, Ryerson University)
Steve Fergus (School of Kinesiology & Health Studies, Queen's University)
Grace-Edward Galabuzi (Politics, Ryerson University)
Cathy Turl (Toronto Public Health)
Pierre Filion (Planning, University of Waterloo)
Kue Young (Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto)
Ana Skinner (Laidlaw Foundation)
Jamie Baxter (Geography, University of Western Ontario)
Izumi Sakamoto (Sociology, University of Toronto)