

The First Pathways Graduates

By Neil Price

In June 2011, the Pathways to Education™ program in Lawrence Heights celebrated the graduation of its first student cohort. It was both exciting and immensely rewarding for everyone to see the program's mission and purpose come to life as proud students embarked on their various post-secondary journeys. Feeding off of this enormous community achievement, we've started the new academic year with renewed energy and determination to see many more of our students realize the same successes.



for learning and personal development. With six Pathways staff dedicated to the new school, we will work closely with all stakeholders in making the school a huge success.

Pathways takes tremendous pride in announcing that Mohamed Moustapha, a recent Pathways graduate, has won a Clifton Foundation Scholarship, which covers all costs of his undergraduate and graduate education. Mohamed is currently studying Toxicology at the University of Guelph. Congratulations, Mohamed!

After a robust registration drive in the Lawrence Heights and Neptune communities this summer, the program has grown substantially. This year, we anticipate serving over 430 students and their families in 42 secondary schools across the GTA.

The new school year has begun and we are particularly excited about the opening of John Polanyi Collegiate Institute, which will offer students in our program and in the broader community enriched opportunities

In addition to our growth and accomplishments, Pathways has created new program directions which include efforts to increase our community profile, a recommitment to parent support and empowerment, deeper integration with other Unison services and a broadened strategy to ensure that we find ways to assist each and every Pathways student. One clear example of this new direction is the runaway success of the Pedal Pushers program, which provides youth from the community with fantastic opportunities to learn technical bike repair skills while having fun.

With the support of the entire community, we look forward to even more achievements in the months ahead!

Spinach salad

Serves six people as a main course, or 12 people as a side salad.

Salad ingredients:

- 1 large container baby spinach
- 1 package mushrooms, sliced
- ¾ cup dried cranberries
- ¾ cup cashews, roasted and unsalted
- 3 tangerines (or other citrus fruit), peeled and sliced in half
- 6 hard-boiled eggs, chopped

Dressing ingredients (makes a lot!):

- 1 cup canola oil
- ⅓ cup cider vinegar
- ½ onion, grated
- 3 Tbsp sugar
- 3 Tbsp celery seed
- 1 tsp dry mustard
- 1 tsp salt

This is a great salad to serve as a meal. It provides two nutrient-packed servings of fruits and vegetables from the spinach, mushrooms, tangerines and dried cranberries, and one serving of meat and alternatives from the egg and cashews.

Top off the meal with a serving of low-fat mozzarella cheese and high-fibre crackers (like Ryvita) and you've made yourself a deliciously balanced meal using all four food groups.

Chew on this fun fact: Spinach is a source of iron, an essential mineral needed to help deliver oxygen to the body's cells. If you don't get enough iron from your diet, you may start to feel weak and tired. The type of iron in spinach and other plant sources, called nonheme iron, is less well absorbed into our bodies. Adding a source of vitamin C to this meal (the tangerine pieces), helps the body increase the absorption of the iron from the spinach.



Unison VOICE

FALL/WINTER 2011

Unison
Health & Community Services
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Bathurst-Finch Community Hub: A Work in Progress

We've finally broken ground! Construction is under way, and the Hub will open next spring. At the Hub, Bathurst-Finch residents will find a wide variety of services from many health care and community service agencies under one roof.

By Michelle-Ann Hylton

On Wednesday, July 6, 2011, members of the Bathurst-Finch community gathered in the parking lot of Northview Heights Secondary School to participate in a ground-breaking ceremony to mark the start of the construction phase of the Bathurst-Finch Community Hub.

"As a member of this community, I am honoured to be part of this momentous occasion. The variety of services to be offered at the Bathurst-Finch Hub will strengthen the fabric of this community, which can only serve to improve the lives of each and every one of us," said event emcee Maureen Simpson.

The Bathurst-Finch Hub is scheduled to open its doors to the public in spring 2012. With Unison Health and Community Services at the helm, the Hub will house Unison's new satellite community health centre, providing treatment services, illness prevention, health promotion and community development through a multi-disciplinary team of health professionals. A dental clinic operated by Toronto Public Health will also be on the list of health services offered at the Hub.

Clients accessing the Bathurst-Finch Hub will benefit from a combination of anchor and supporting partners. Anchor partners include: Family Service Toronto, CUIAS, JVS Toronto, KCC Multicultural Services,

KCWA Family and Social Services and North York Community House. Along with supporting partners Big Brothers and Big Sisters Toronto, Circle of Care, Downsview Services to Seniors, Hong Fook Mental Health Association and North York Women's Centre, partners will provide an array of social services geared specifically to meet the variety of needs of residents in the Bathurst-Finch community. Hub partner services include: settlement, caregiver/family support, case coordination, mentoring, employment services, life skills and services for seniors.

With capital funding secured from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, United Way Toronto and the federal government's Infrastructure Stimulus Fund, the Unison team is working to bring to reality the dream of a community hub with dedicated space and a garden for residents to get together.

Special invitation for community agencies and residents:

On Thursday, November 17, 2011, we invite community agencies and residents in the Bathurst-Finch neighbourhood to attend the



Bathurst-Finch Hub Information Session to learn more about the progress of the Hub. The session will be held from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Northview Heights Secondary School cafeteria (550 Finch Avenue West). For more information, please contact Michelle-Ann Hylton at 416-645-7575 ext 2430.

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Our Locations



LH **Lawrence Heights**
12 Flemington Road
Toronto, ON M6A 2N4
Phone: 416-787-1661

KR **Keele-Rogers**
1651 Keele Street
Toronto, ON M6M 3W2
Phone: 416-653-5400

BF **Bathurst-Finch**
5987 Bathurst Street, Suite 104 (2nd floor)
Toronto, ON M2R 1Z3
Phone: 647-436-0385

JT **Jane-Trethewey**
1541 Jane Street
Toronto, ON M9N 2R3
Phone: 416-645-7575

PE **Pathways to Education**
Lawrence Square
700 Lawrence Avenue West, Suite 326
Toronto, ON M6A 3B4
Phone: 416-787-6800



DATES TO REMEMBER

Upcoming Unison events:

- Monday, October 24, 2011** Annual general meeting
- Tuesday, November 8, 2011** Lawrence Heights site community night
- Thursday, November 17, 2011** Bathurst-Finch Hub Information Session
- Thursday, November 17, 2011** Bathurst-Finch community night
- Thursday, November 17, 2011** Diabetes Awareness Month celebration at the Jane Street Hub
- Tuesday, November 22, 2011** Keele-Rogers site community night
- Monday, November 29, 2011** Jane-Trethewey site community night

Unison Health and Community Services will be closed:

- Monday, October 10, 2011** Thanksgiving
- Monday, December 26, 2011** Boxing Day
- Monday, January 2, 2012**
- Monday, February 20, 2012** Family Day

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Unison
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Meet and Greet: Unison Community Nights

Would you like to learn more about Unison's programs and services? Do you want to meet other community members and discuss neighbourhood issues and priorities? Do you have ideas as to how we can better meet your needs? We would like to hear from you!

You are invited to join us for our community nights, which will be held throughout November at each of our four locations.

All open houses/community forums run from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the following dates and locations:

Lawrence Heights site (12 Flemington Rd.), Tuesday, November 8

Bathurst-Finch (Northview Heights Secondary School, 550 Finch Ave. W.), Thursday, November 17

Keele-Rogers site (1651 Keele St.), Tuesday, November 22

Jane-Trethewey site (Jane Street Hub, 1541 Jane St.), Monday, November 29

For more information, please contact Oleksandra Budna at 416-587-8225. See the map of our locations on the back page of this issue of *Unison Voice*.

Message from the CEO and the Board Chair

We are pleased to present the fall/winter issue of Unison Voice. It's just one of the many ways in which we share information with our members, clients, partners and community.

This fall we are looking forward to many ways of engaging with you. In this edition, you will find our programs and services calendar, which provides many options for getting involved. We are also very excited to be planning for Unison's first annual general meeting on October 24, 2011, at the Jane-Trethewey site. At the AGM, we will be sharing with you the successes and challenges of our first year, as well as our new Strategic Plan, which we will use to deliver on our mission to work together to deliver accessible and high quality health and community services that are integrated, respond to needs, build on strengths and inspire change. In November, each of our sites will be hosting an open house and community forum and we hope that you will join us to learn more about neighbourhood issues, Unison activities and to give us feedback on how well we are meeting your needs.

We look forward to seeing you throughout the fall!

In health,

Andrea Cohen, CEO

Michael Rethazi, Board Chair



Looking for Unison programs and services?

Check out the current edition of our Program Calendar, included with this issue of Unison Voice, or visit us online at www.unisonhcs.org.

Unison Partners with Humber River Regional Hospital and a Locum Psychiatrist

New partnerships will make for faster and easier access to psychiatric services for clients in need.

By Frances Lerson

Mental illness is "a condition that affects a person's moods, thoughts and behaviours" (www.stigma.org). Today, with the right help and support, people with mental illness can lead healthy and productive lives. Yet misconceptions are commonly held about people with mental illness. People with mental illness are frequently misunderstood.

The range of issues and concerns for individuals who have mental illness and the concerns of their families are numerous. For these individuals, the sad truth is that wait times to get needed help and support is typically long. Clients seeking psychiatric support in Toronto often need to wait from three to six months (sometimes longer) for assessment, and may then need to wait again before treatment begins. These long wait times pose a significant barrier for clients to get the help they need when they need it.

At Unison, our teams are aware of the barriers our clients face when accessing psychiatric treatment. To break down those barriers and decrease psychiatric wait times, we have partnered with Humber River Regional Hospital Mental Health Services and contracted a

locum psychiatrist to bring on-site psychiatric care to all our clients. Services are accessible at both the Keele-Rogers and Jane-Trethewey sites. Access to such services helps avoid unnecessary visits to hospital emergency departments. We are working to bring similar service to the Lawrence Heights site.

We have received very good feedback from clients who were able to access services within a very short timeframe (usually weeks). Unison staff have benefited from these new partnerships as well! These visiting psychiatrists are available for our staff to consult about client treatment and care options, which supports ongoing learning and educational opportunities for our staff.

Providing professional medical and supportive care to our clients with mental health issues stems from our commitment to creating safe environments free from all types of oppression, including stigmatization of those experiencing mental illness. Unison staff are committed to "treating all people with dignity, honesty and respect" and to enhance both physical health and mental wellbeing of each client, their families and the community at large.

Jane Street Hub Summer BBQ Builds Community Spirit

Weston-Mount Dennis residents joined us for a day of grilling, dancing and socializing... and learning about all that the Jane Street Hub has to offer, too.

by Michelle-Ann Hylton

Delicious food, top-notch entertainment and community spirit, these are some of the words used to describe the Jane Street Hub's summer barbeque, held on Wednesday, July 27, 2011.

Over 400 people attended, and Hub anchor agencies used the opportunity to promote the variety of social and health services offered at the Hub. Community members were actively involved in the planning of the event and contributed in a variety of ways. The Mount Dennis Social Club staffed the grills, members of the Hub's Community Advisory Panel served food and residents along the Jane St. corridor provided the entertainment. The Hub's outreach worker Michael Miller and volunteer Dionne Bailey emceed the event. Guests enjoyed several musical tributes and dance numbers from a variety of backgrounds including a Tahitian dance troupe organized by Hub partner agency North York Community House.

While still in its first year of existence, the Jane Street Hub has done well in its efforts to provide services to and engage community residents in the Weston-Mount Dennis neighbourhood. The Hub has partnered with organizations such as the West Coalition on Housing and Homelessness to organize a community meeting about the October 6 provincial election, and recently held a Commitment 2 Community meeting, an information-sharing event that served to increase community members' awareness of the city's budget process and potential service cuts.

For more information on the Jane Street Hub and upcoming events, please contact: Matt Brubacher, Community Engagement Coordinator at matt.brubacher@unisonhcs.org or 416-645-7575 ext 2431.



Manage Your Stress: Don't Let It Manage You!

Seven tips for controlling the stress in your life.

By Lorna Baker

Everyone experiences some level of stress. We know that stress in small doses can make us productive. This is known as "good stress." Unfortunately, most of us are more familiar with the negative side of stress. It can cause headaches, irritability and insomnia, just to name a few of the harmful effects. We all know what we are supposed to do to tame the stress demon: get more sleep, set priorities, etc. Yet quite often it doesn't go away and we feel like we're losing a battle to stress.

Stress is a feeling, not a dysfunction. It happens when what is demanded of us exceeds what we feel we are capable of giving. Stress can be a big contributor to many health problems.

Some ways to manage stress are:

1. Be nice to yourself. Don't become so involved with others that you forget you are important.
2. Strive for a balance between work and play. You deserve breaks and vacations, even mini-vacations to recharge (e.g., a long weekend away).

3. Get moving. Physical activity reduces stress and recharges your energy.

4. Tune in to your body's messages. Each of us has different messaging so you need to get to know your body's response to increased stress and take steps to manage it.

5. Have a support system. Surround yourself with family and friends, with the people who love you and care about you.

6. Give yourself time and space between stressors. Schedule time for humour, rediscover the "child within."

7. Absolutely seek professional help when you need it so you can be supported in making a constructive plan to deal with stress and protect yourself from its devastating effects.

Remember, not all stress is bad. The key is recognizing when you are stressed and keeping stress to a minimum.

Adapted from "Turn Stress into an Asset."

"Nurturing a spirit of resilience and heroism" Profile of a Health Champion in Our Community, Minerva Williams

By Ramann Patara

Whenever I come here [to Unison], any request that I have, Unison supports me... it's good here... very good here."

So says Minerva Williams, a resident of Lawrence Heights for the past 11 years. She has spent almost 10 of those attending the Forever Young Seniors' Group.

Minerva is a strong champion of the program and introduced four additional community members to it. She often encourages other seniors in the community to attend the group, or take advantage of Unison's many programs and services. Minerva is a regular attendee at all the seniors' functions and loves the support the group offers.

The group's health promoter, Olu Akinkunmi, states, "In spite of her physical challenges, Minerva hardly misses opportunities to come to programs and organized community trips, and she brings to the group courage and persistence to interact in face of physical mobility challenges.

"Her contributions to Unison's vision exemplifies there is no need to be socially excluded, or limit personal development because of challenges which we face in our daily lives. Minerva is a classic example of modelling and mentoring in community development. Minerva has stayed involved in the program for a number of reasons, for example, she enjoys the company of other people to share experiences, stories and 'learn to co-exist with one another in a peaceful manner.'"

Minerva also adds, "The program keeps us alive and keeps us growing. We learn so much about food, gardening, banking, health, living a positive life, and much more." Minerva describes the shared lunch as a "beautiful experience" around the sharing of food and laughter. In her free time, Minerva enjoys reading, watching movies and socializing with her community. She likes to spend time with her three children, nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



Unison Leads the Fight Against Diabetes

Why diabetes is such a serious disease, and what we are doing about it.

By Amy Cheng

Why is Diabetes such a serious disease?

Diabetes can shorten life expectancy by five to 15 years. Diabetes can cause heart attack or stroke. Diabetes can cause kidney failure. Diabetes is the single largest cause of blindness in Canada. Diabetes can lead to limb amputations. Diabetes can also lead to serious mental issues such as depression.

Currently, one in four Canadians is diagnosed with either pre-diabetes or type 2 diabetes.

What are we doing at the Diabetes Education Centre (DEC)?

To fight against this global pandemic, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (which has funded the DEC since 2002) has provided us with more resources to expand our service and increase access. We now have 12 certified diabetes educators, registered dietitians and nurses who offer group education, individual assessment and ongoing follow-up to clients who are diagnosed with pre-diabetes and type 2 diabetes.

All our services are free. We also provide blood glucose monitors, interpretation services, child care and TTC tokens.

The DEC offers services at four locations. Please see the sidebar for our expanded service locations and operation hours.

How you can help

You can help Unison lead the fight against diabetes by doing the following:

- Visit your family physician and get tested yourself!
- Tell your friends and relatives to get tested, too.
- Individuals aged 40 and over should be tested at least every three years.
- Encourage your friends and relatives who have diabetes to receive proper care and education for the prevention of further complications.

Give us a call if you have any questions.

Remember that anyone living with diabetes can lead a healthy, happy life.

Live long, live healthy with diabetes. We will help you get there.

Contact the DEC today at 416-787-1661 ext 301.

"Hand in Hand": Art Beat Puts on a Show

Unison artists show off their talents.

By Joseph Bataclan

Unison's Adult Protective Services (APS) program is geared towards assisting adults with developmental disabilities to integrate and live independently in the community. Since 1993, APS has been running weekly art classes called Art Beat. Art Beat provides an opportunity for individuals with developmental or mental health challenges who would be unable to access mainstream programs.

The epitome of the Art Beat artists' efforts is the annual Hand in Hand art show. This year the exhibition was held at the Jane Street Hub to promote both the group and Hub.

The show ran for two days and featured more than 50 pieces in



different art media including mosaic tile, stencils, acrylic paintings, silkscreened shirts and bags created by the 22 artists that are part of the group. These pieces were for sale with part of the proceeds going directly to the artists. This year, in addition to a public opening reception, the exhibition also featured an art workshop. The artists and

facilitators were presented with certificates of recognition for their outstanding contribution to the Art Beat program.

The group will now embark on a new collaborative partnership with UrbanArts Toronto, who will also assist in the next year's art show. We hope to see you there!

New Members Wanted!

You are invited to become a member of Unison Health and Community Services. There are benefits and privileges of membership!

- Members have the right to vote at our annual general meeting
- Members receive regular updates about our programs and services
- Membership is a great way to help strengthen your community
- Membership is a great way to connect with others in your community
- Members receive a special Unison t-shirt

The membership fee is \$1 for one year. Sign up today! Get a membership form from the reception desk, or call Ana Garcia at 416-787-1676 ext 257.