

Welcome to Unison eVoice, a monthly bulletin that profiles programs and partners at Unison.

## Program Profile **Pedal Pushers**

### Staff Lead: Alex Murphy

Alex has experience working with teenagers in a variety of educational contexts. After completing her Bachelor of Education at OISE, she worked as Fredericton High School's Newcomer Program Co-ordinator for two years. Alex joined Unison last August. As a Student/Parent Support Worker, she provides academic and personal support to Pathways students. A cycling enthusiast, Alex bikes to work and her school visits. She started Pedal Pushers as a summer side-project in order to promote the benefits of cycling and provide community youth with the opportunity to build their own bikes.



### Who are Pedal Pushers?

Pedal Pushers is a bicycle recycling project running in Lawrence Heights throughout the summer. It is open to youth aged 13-18. The Pedal Pushers workshop is set up in the parking garage of the Lawrence Heights site, Unison Health and Community Services. The project is made possible through a partnership with Bicycle Commons, who provide mechanical training, tools, supplies, and logistical supports.

Participants choose donated used bikes to repair with the assistance of Bicycle Commons mechanics. Once they have completed the repairs on their bikes, they can take them home to keep. Afterwards, students can continue to work on other bikes for Bicycle Commons to give to local community members.

Pedal Pushers currently has 26 active participants. The youth are excited about owning their



own bicycles and more importantly, the skills they are acquiring. According to one participant, Sahar Eidi, "If your bike breaks, you'll know what to do to fix it because of Pedal Pushers." The project operates on a peer-educator model. Once students master one aspect of bike repair, they teach it to their peers. This practice maximises the capacity of the project. According to Alex, "As someone who finds bike repair incredibly frustrating at times, it is inspiring to see how patient the student participants are with the entire process. They are also very generous with the time they spend helping their peers."

The benefits of owning a bike are clear to the students. "With bikes, we can go so many places so quickly and explore our community," said Sayara Rajab Khan. "We don't want to use buses or cars because they make us dizzy, and that's how you know they aren't good for you. They aren't good for the environment."

Community Partner Profile

Northview Heights Secondary School

**School Motto: Scientia-Abor-Vitae—Tree of Knowledge and Life**



Northview Heights Secondary School (grades 9-12) is proud of its tradition of providing a vast array of programs for students. The school has high expectations for academic achievement and encourage active participation in school-wide activities. Its safe and caring community embraces the diversity of all students and works to meet the needs and interests of all. Students are provided with a rich and challenging curriculum that enables them to successfully acquire the essential skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. The specialty programs Northview offers give students enrichment opportunities and industry certification.

**MANY PROGRAMS, MANY CHOICES**

Northview offers programs in CyberARTS, Academic Program for Gifted Athletes; Honours Mathematics, Science & Technology; Focus on IT and Construction Trades Coop. Its diverse programs, such as the Culinary Arts and Visual and Performing Arts, offer students a variety of secondary education opportunities. Flexible and unique programs have also been designed for students requiring literacy, numeracy, ESL and Special Education support. Home to the Canadian Young Scientist Journal, Northview provides opportunities to its students as well as other TDSB students to publish original research articles.

**MANY SUPPORTS, MANY SUCCESSES**

Northview takes care of its students. New Canadians are supported by the Settlement and Education Partnerships in Toronto (SEPT) workers and participate in the Newcomer Orientation Week pro-

gram to get acquainted with our school. Our support system includes caring teachers, school staff plus a Child Youth Worker, peer mentoring, homework help and endless athletic opportunities.

**INVOLVED PARENTS, INVOLVED COMMUNITY**

Parents and community members have been actively involved with Northview to provide valuable support, input and suggestions. Northview maintains strong bonds with community groups to promote partnerships. Weekly tutorials, guest speakers, volunteer opportunities for student leadership development and peer tutoring are provided to students. Northview is one of the TDSB's 16 designated "Full Service Schools" due in large part to the multitude of community partners that have been forged over the last few years. With the impending development of Unison's Bathurst-Finch Community Hub on the Northview property and the partnership with North York Harvest Food Bank, the potential for increased interaction with community partners seem endless.

Principal:  
Peter Paputsis  
Vice Principal(s):  
Laura Pagnotta  
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Superintendent:  
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Bathurst-Finch Community Hub Groundbreaking Ceremony

Scheduled to open in 2012 on the Northview Heights grounds, the Bathurst-Finch Community Hub will become home to Unison's satellite site as well as a wide range of community and social services agencies.

