

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

## Program Profile

## Community Wellness Night at Bathurst-Finch

**WHAT:** Community services, free women's fitness, ping pong, healthy snacks, dj and child care.

**WHEN:** The second Monday of every month from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

**WHERE:** Antibes Community Centre (140 Antibes Drive)

Have you ever wanted to play ping pong, consult a lawyer, eat a healthy snack, listen to music, learn how to use free weights, meet your neighbours and attend a forms clinic, all at the same time? Here's your chance! On the second Monday of every month, Unison teams up with Antibes Community Centre, North York Community House, Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre and the Bathurst-Finch Network to present 'Community Wellness Night,' a one-stop-shop for services, exercise and community fun.

All services at Community Wellness Night are free. To make an appointment for financial counselling or for the legal clinic, which covers area of law including immigration, tenant rights and workers rights, please call 647.436.0385 or email [bfn@unisonhcs.org](mailto:bfn@unisonhcs.org).

Community Wellness Night was created in response to the demand for central, friendly and easy-to-access services in the Bathurst-Finch neighbourhood. In addition, while there is a great demand for exercise programs in Bathurst-Finch, people face many barriers including fees and child care. Finally, both community residents and workers like to spend time together, eat healthy snacks and enjoy music (provided by fabulous neighbourhood musician and Bathurst-Finch Network volunteer, Erez Sussman). We thought we'd try bundling it all into one beautiful package and take it from there.

Drop by and join us, we'll be waiting for you!

### WHO MAKES COMMUNITY WELLNESS NIGHT HAPPEN?

Community Wellness Night involves the whole Bathurst-Finch team. Meet some workers involved in the program:

#### Amy Katz

*What's your job description?*

I'm the team leader for Unison's Bathurst-Finch site. I also coordinate the Bathurst-Finch Network and am involved in some city-wide advocacy work.

*What do you like about Community Wellness Night?*

It involves Bathurst-Finch Network members, Unison's BF team, and people from across the neighbourhood. People come for different reasons and stay to share ideas and plan for the future. It's a joy to be a part of it as it unfolds. And we get to listen to beautiful music at the same time.

#### Julia Fursova

*What's your job description?*

I am a Community Health Promoter. I plan, implement and evaluate programs that help people to lead healthier lives and create environments that support and sustain healthy living.

*What do you like about Community Wellness Night?*

It is an important step in creating an environment that supports health in its holistic sense. It is not enough to advise people to stay physically active but is also important to look at the barriers that may prevent them from getting exercise such as costs, availability of programs, and childcare.

Through this program, we can contribute to removing these barriers and this is what I like most about Community Wellness Night. This and the fact that it is about community as a whole, not just individual wellness.

#### Hamda Mohamed

*What's your job description?*

I am the outreach worker with the Bathurst-Finch Site.

*What do you like about Community Wellness Night?*

I love that the Community Wellness Night gives people who may not have otherwise had the opportunity the chance to utilize such amazing and free services in a fun and welcoming environment. The success of the Wellness Night also highlights the efforts and hard work of the entire Bathurst-Finch team which is a wonderful thing to be a part of.

Community Partner Profile

# Bathurst-Finch Network

**The Bathurst-Finch Network (BFN)** is a group of community workers and residents in the Bathurst-Finch neighbourhood. Formed in 2009, the BFN now has a number of sub-committees and runs year-round community-based programming in the neighbourhood.

**Who participates in the BFN?**

Community residents and workers participate on the BFN steering committee and sub-committees and in its general membership.

**What kinds of programs and events do you run?**

Regular programming and events include:

'**Meet and Speak,**' a weekly free drop-in ESL Conversation Circle at Centennial Library every Monday from 10:15 am - 12:00 pm. Run by Unison health promoter Judith Otto in partnership with community residents, Toronto Public Library, Toronto Employment and Social Services and North York Community House. A project of the BFN ESL committee.

Monthly **Community Women's Dinners** (location varies) run as a partnership between community residents, Unison, Antibes Community Centre, Fisherville Junior High and North York Community House. A project of the BFN Women's Committee.

**Candidates forums** during elections, run in partnership with community residents and agencies across the neighbourhood. A project of the BFN Events Committee.

Annual **Bathurst-Finch Community Day** and **Bathurst-Finch Community Picnic**, run in partnership with community residents and agencies across the network. Projects of the BFN Events Committee.

Weekly **fresh food market** run as a partnership between Unison, FoodShare, Toronto Public Health, Circle of Care, Griffin Centre and community residents. (Runs spring through fall at Antibes CC.) A project of the BFN Food Action Team.

Free **women's fitness with child care** every Monday night from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Antibes Community Centre run as a partnership between Unison and Antibes CC.

**What else do you do?**

The BFN also works to introduce additional infrastructure and services to the neighbourhood. We successfully pushed for Monday opening hours at Centennial Library. Specific BFN members also worked together on a campaign to make Antibes CC a Priority Centre - free for children and youth. (This is supposed to come into effect in 2012, we are waiting to see what the City Council does.)

Right now, the BFN senior's committee is working hard to bring a community bus back to Bathurst-Finch. The BFN ESL committee has big dreams (and concrete plans) to deliver integrated ESL services in the neighbourhood. The BFN Youth Service Network is working on a comprehensive service guide for area youth workers. And the BFN Food Action Team is working to introduce a new community garden to the BF neighbourhood.



Community Women's Dinner

# Bathurst-Finch Network Women's Committee

The **Bathurst-Finch Network Women's Committee** has big plans for the future. eVoice catches up with committee Co-Chairs Diana Valdez and Christine Fung and founding member Cleofe Bangsoy to find out what's coming up.

**Diana Valdez** brings tremendous energy, skill, strategic insight, facilitation experience and event organizing flair to her work with the Women's Committee. Her warmth, enthusiasm and commitment to the bigger picture keep everyone motivated and smiling.

**What can we expect from the Womens' Committee over the next few months?**

We'll be bringing our **monthly community**

**women's dinners** to a higher level by including information about what's going on in the community. Furthermore, we want to take a more proactive approach and engage the many skills of women's dinner participants. Our vision incorporates fun and relaxation with action. We believe that an empowered and active person has the capacity to empower their family and that an empowered family results in a healthier and more productive community.



**Cleofe Bangsoy** has been with the Bathurst Finch Women's Committee from the beginning, and brings incredible insight and commitment to community work. Her amazing skills in organizing and facilitating events,

bringing in fantastic new members and determining strategic directions have helped make the group what it is today.

**Why did you get involved in starting the Women's Committee?**

The committee is designed to get women together to talk, have fun and share their skills. Since the women's dinner started about a year and a half ago, many women are participating and looking forward to the next month's activity. Now we are looking forward to doing some additional projects to keep women busy and active. Luckily, we have a very energetic and skilled women's committee and have unity and understanding in the group. We're working to make the community a better place to live.



**Christine Fung** is a committed community volunteer who brings a broad range of expertise to

the group. Her fantastic organizing and facilitation skills and long-term thinking keep the women's committee on track and moving forward.

**What's your favourite part of the women's committee?**

I enjoy every minute I'm working with a group of enthusiastic committee members. Our monthly event provides a platform for women to communicate and socialize in a safe and comfortable environment. I feel rewarded when I see the number of participants have grown and their feedback has been great. Together with the participants, we build a stronger community.

Diana, Christine and Cleofe are joined by a fantastic, creative, skilled, committed and incredibly fun group of women who have been working very hard for two years to bring beautiful community events to women in the Bathurst-Finch area. A big thank you to this group and past Women's Committee members who have put so much work into this project!