

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 2020



REGENT PARK
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE



COMMUNITY



HEALTH



CARE



OUR MISSION

To provide comprehensive health and community services that remove barriers and improve lives

OUR PRIORITIES

Deliver innovative services
Ensure children and youth can thrive
Advocate for positive systemic change
Enable and empower our staff
Strengthen our infrastructure and sustainability



C O M M U N I T Y



H E A L T H



C A R E

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

Greetings from the Regent Park Community Health Centre!

Before the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdowns, we planned to report back to you on our first full year of operating under our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. Instead—much like you—we have a distinct pre-and post-COVID story and so the following pages reflect that narrative.

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the Regent Park Community Health Centre (RPCHC) continued to respond to the ongoing opioid overdose crisis across our neighbourhoods. We expanded our street outreach in partnership with other community and health agencies. We also expanded our harm reduction and overdose prevention work by establishing a Consumption and Treatment Service. The plan for this year is to increase the number of people we can serve by redesigning the ground floor at our main site on Dundas East.

To align our activities with our strategic priority “to work together across teams and agencies so that children and youth can thrive,” we consolidated all of our services and programs geared for children, youth and their families into one department. To support this, a community needs assessment survey (designed and executed by residents) was undertaken to better understand the priorities across our Regent Park and Moss Park neighbourhoods.

RPCHC supported numerous advocacy campaigns to address homelessness and accessible housing, and challenge systemic and anti-black racism. We also advocated with our municipal government to fund the needs and priorities of Regent Park residents outlined in the Regent Park Social Development Plan.

When the pandemic hit, it became essential to ensure the safety of our clients and staff. Policies were reviewed, services revised, and we put in place new ways to communicate with our clients and service users. We are proud of the achievements the staff, Board, volunteers and RPCHC clients have been able to accomplish under these unprecedented challenges and risks. Inspired by the resilience of the individuals and families we serve, we remain committed to our mission to provide comprehensive health and community services that remove barriers and improve lives.

We look forward to working together to ensure our community's needs are met in a safe and efficient way.



Paulos Gebreyesus
Executive Director



Akosua May Matthews
President of the Board

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Responding to the diverse and complex needs of our community

WHAT'S NEW

In preparation for stages four and five of the Regent Park Revitalization project, our Community Health team has been focused on strengthening the capacity of marginalized community members to have a voice in the ongoing redevelopment of Regent Park. We have made significant efforts to attract the participation of our youth and young adult population—a group that has not had significant representation in the past.

RPCHC continues to advocate with the city about homelessness and the need for affordable housing. Our team supported a community-driven development proposal to build rent-geared-to-income/social housing at 214-230 Sherbourne. And, along with partner agencies, we advocated to get homelessness declared a national disaster.

As part of our efforts to continually improve our services and save lives, we expanded our Consumption and Treatment Services facilities and team.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted our face-to-face service delivery. The African Men's Group, Sex Workers Drop-in, Women's Art Program, ESL Program, Newcomers Homework Club and Tuesday Immigrant/Refugee Support Drop-in have all been put on hold.

The distribution of harm reduction supplies and the Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) continue to operate during the pandemic to support the battle against the ongoing opioid crisis. W.O.W. (Wednesday One Stop Walk-in) continues to provide a range of healthcare services to vulnerable and homeless members of our community.

While communication with our clients continued over the phone, many aspects of face-to-face visits could not be replicated, including diet counselling with the use of food props or foot assessments for nerve damage and decreases in blood flow (common complications in diabetes).

Our registered dietitian recognized early in the pandemic that there was a lack of credible, evidence-based information available to the residents of Regent Park. She developed a one-page nutrition fact sheet written in clear language. A weekly communication also went out on important topics, including how to eat well during shelter-in-place and tips for food safety and proper storage.



The diabetes education
program served

2,084
individuals

CLINICAL

Providing ongoing primary care, specialty clinic care, chronic disease management, dental, physiotherapy and chiropody services

WHAT'S NEW

In August 2019, The Blue Door Clinic opened at RPCHC to provide services to people with HIV who have limited or no health insurance. Patients receive otherwise inaccessible HIV medical care focused on stabilizing and managing their condition and other complicating medical issues. The bi-monthly walk-in clinic also provides peer support, connections to other much-needed social services and referrals to stable ongoing care. As part of our mandate to engage and expand the network of health service organizations and primary care providers who have the skills to take on HIV positive patients, the Blue Door team provided specialized training to 20 staff at a partner community health centre.

The Blue Door Clinic is a collaboration supported internally by the Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment and our primary care clinic, and externally by Casey House, Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples, Hassle Free Clinic, Ontario HIV Treatment Network, Parkdale Queen West CHC, Sherbourne Health Centre, Toronto People with AIDS Foundation and ViiV Healthcare.

Summer 2019 saw other improvements to primary care at RPCHC and in three outreach settings. We hired two new chiropodists, enabling the Clinical team to reinstate foot care services in English and Vietnamese. More than 400 clients at the Health Centre and at three outreach locations received foot care by the end of the fiscal year.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 emergency orders issued by the provincial government in March led to the suspension of non-urgent in-person services, severely limiting access to care for our clients and increasing the risk of exacerbating existing health problems. Our Dental Clinic closed and clients were redirected to emergency dental services where available. The pandemic also limited the availability of some staff to deliver primary and specialized care due to caregiver responsibilities at home, as well as redeployment to pandemic-related roles such as screening, personal protection equipment (PPE) management, and government-mandated testing of clients in shelters and other communal settings.

To ensure continuity of care, the Clinical team quickly adjusted to delivering care by phone or video where appropriate, and staff across the health centre adapted best practices to ensure the limited PPE would last as long as possible.

There were
18,100
individual service interactions
with our primary care clients



CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Providing support, opportunities and safe spaces to enable children, youth and their families to thrive

WHAT'S NEW

As the redevelopment of Regent Park continues to shift our community demographics and dynamics, RPCHC must also pivot to respond to the changing needs of our residents.

RPCHC's recent strategic plan identified involving children, youth and families in the design and implementation of meaningful initiatives, as well as providing integrated, accessible and holistic services across programs. To help us accomplish this, we combined The EarlyON Child and Family Centre and The Pathways to Education Program™ to form a new department known as Children, Youth and Family Services. We also did a needs assessment with over 300 residents of Regent Park and Moss Park to help inform the development and delivery of services and programs for children, youth and families in our community.

Key findings from the assessment demonstrated that there is a need for:

- Access to mental health supports in the community, particularly for Regent Park youth
- Safe spaces and programming that can engage children and youth at a younger age
- More opportunities for improved outcomes, including recreational programming, education and employment supports

As a result of these findings, we launched *The Underground*, a welcoming youth-centric space made possible with the support of Ontario Trillium Foundation. This new youth lounge allows our students to participate in meaningful after school programming and hone their interpersonal skills. We are currently developing a new pilot for middle school students called Youth Enrichment Academy (YEA!) to help build young people's resilience and further develop their social and emotional strengths.

Our program teams are always finding new and innovative ways to support our young people. Pathways held two career nights to introduce students to various careers in the medical sciences. These events were held in partnership with St. Michael's Hospital to support their commitment to bring STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) education and outreach opportunities to a diverse group of young people. The EarlyON team developed an early communication skills group for children and families newly diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. We also created a bi-weekly support group to allow families with children with special needs to build social relationships and access consultation and education in a safe supportive environment.



There were more than

7,000

visits to our EarlyOn Centre

RPCHC aims to provide a continuum of wrap-around supports from perinatal to young adulthood. Our EarlyON Child and Family Centre and The Pathways to Education Program offer a comprehensive web of supports to improve resilience, reduce social isolation and help the children, youth and families in our community thrive. To accomplish this, EarlyON programming focuses on strengthening child development and parenting skills, while Pathways responds to one of the core social determinants of health: education.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Like most organizations, we were forced to discontinue our in-person programs.

Pathways staff quickly responded to the changing needs of our student population. Tutoring was delivered via Zoom to support students with their course work. Social platforms such as Instagram and Netflix Parties created opportunities for students to connect and interact virtually. Live streaming events provided students with the academic and social support they needed but could not get in person. One live stream event included guidance counsellors from the Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board to inform students of what they needed to successfully finish their school year online. Another live stream event for graduating students addressed questions about moving on to post-secondary institutions during this uncertain time.

Our EarlyON team also responded quickly and efficiently to provide virtual program supports via telephone, Zoom and the Ontario TeleMedicine Network (OTN). We provided counselling sessions for parents and piloted an eight-week School Readiness Program for clients who had children entering kindergarten this year. In addition, our team secured over \$4,000 worth of vouchers for our families who were experiencing food insecurity as a result of the pandemic.

Additionally, many of our staff members were redeployed to pandemic-related roles across RPCHC, including on-call social work, sentinel screening, PPE management, on-call ground floor support and building harm reduction kits.

The resilience of our teams and their ability to provide innovative programming throughout the pandemic has allowed us to continue offering critical services to children, youth and families during this challenging time.

Pathways served
710
full-time students
throughout the school year





294

CLIENTS RECEIVED
PHYSIOTHERAPY
SERVICES

RPCHC



COMMUNITY HEALTH
DISTRIBUTED OVER

120,000

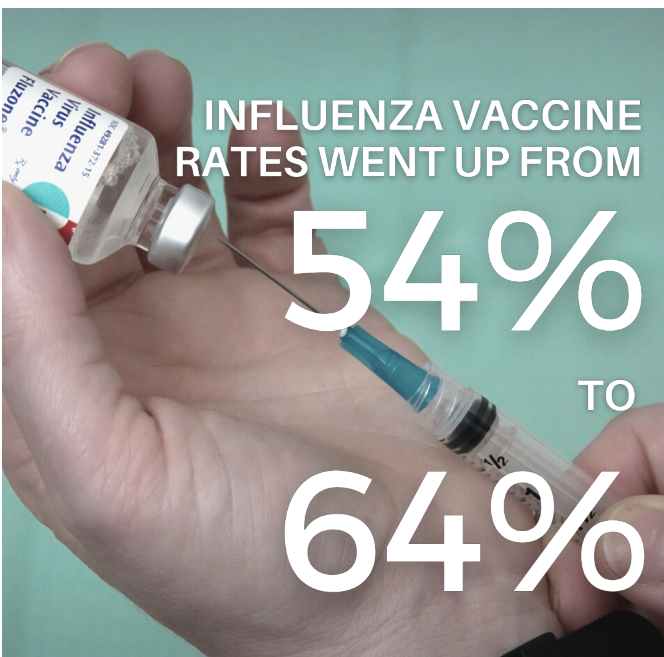
NEEDLES AS PART OF OUR
HARM REDUCTION SERVICES



WE SERVED

1,030

DENTAL
CLIENTS



INFLUENZA VACCINE
RATES WENT UP FROM

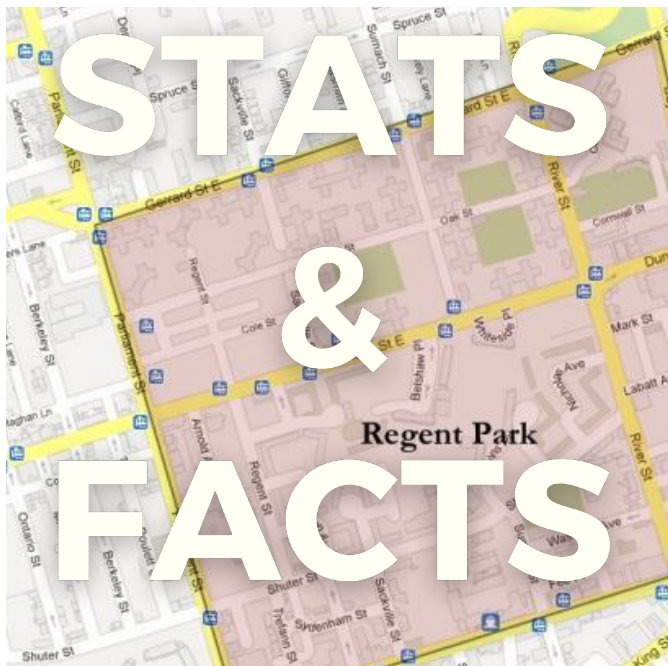
54%

TO

64%

710

CARE PACKAGES WERE
CREATED TO SUPPORT
VULNERABLE MOTHERS
AND BABIES



12

OVERDOSE PREVENTION
WORKSHOPS TOOK PLACE
WITH OUR PARTNER AGENCIES
AND SEVERAL RESPITES AND
SHELTERS

40

CHILDREN REGISTERED IN
THE NEWCOMERS
HOMEWORK CLUB



MORE THAN

135

FAMILIES WERE
SUPPORTED BY OUR CHILD
AND FAMILY ADVOCACY
PROGRAMMING



155

STUDENTS
GRADUATED FROM
THE PATHWAYS TO
EDUCATION
PROGRAM

90%

OF OUR CLIENTS SURVEYED
STATED THAT THEY WERE
ABLE TO GET AN
APPOINTMENT ON
THE DATE THEY WANTED

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Ensuring the fiscal and administrative health of RPCHC

WHAT'S NEW

RPCHC hired a new Director of Finance and Administration in October 2019. Fresh into the role, he initiated significant improvements to internal processes related to payroll and human resources, as well as important upgrades to staff computers, RPCHC servers and backup network security solutions.

With \$300,000 in capital upgrade funding, the team implemented the second phase of the HVAC replacements and repairs identified in the building assessment conducted last year.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Our team plays a key role in supporting all programs at RPCHC and its remote locations. In March, much of our efforts shifted to facility maintenance and ensuring a safe environment for our service providers and clients during COVID-19. We installed glass barriers at the reception and screening desks, and there have been upgrades to the HVAC system to minimize the risk of infections across various program sites.

In line with the advice of public health authorities in response to COVID-19, and to ensure a safe and secure environment for staff and clients, many RPCHC employees have shifted to remote work. Our IT team quickly responded to the needs of virtual workstations and deployed existing laptops with required set up so there would be minimal disruption in our services to clients and the community. We continue to review options for IT infrastructure and network upgrades to respond to the impacts the pandemic has had on our service providers and clients.

The pandemic has led to increased costs and put significant pressure on our operational budget. With no additional funding to support for pandemic-related costs, we have had to respond to these new challenges by tapping into existing resources.



6,190*

visitors to our health centre were
provided COVID-19
screening/assessments

*does not include staff members screened

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND FUNDERS

DONORS:

Charm Torres
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FUNDERS:

Canadian Women's Foundation
City of Toronto - Shelter, Support & Housing Administration
City of Toronto - Toronto Urban Health Fund
City of Toronto - Investment in Neighbourhood
Ontario HIV Treatment Network
Ontario Ministry of Health - AIDS Bureau
Ontario Ministry of Health - Consumption Treatment Services
Pathways to Education Canada
Public Health Agency of Canada
The City of Toronto - EarlyOn
Ontario Health - Toronto Region (Formerly Central Local Health
Integration Network)
United Way of Greater Toronto

SPECIAL PROJECTS ADDRESSING COVID-19 IN OUR COMMUNITY



MOSS PARK FOOD BAG PROGRAM

A partnership between RPCHC and United Way allowed us to provide clients with a good selection of fresh fruits and vegetables, some of which were grown locally. More than 400 food free food bags were distributed over eight weeks.

“Pre-pandemic we were able to provide our clients with a relaxed space and healthy food options such as cereal, fresh fruit, yogurt and more. Due to COVID-19, we have had to limit access to the space and sacrifice fresh produce for packaged snacks. With the implementation of the Food Bag Program, we were able to offer healthy options to our clients and support their wellbeing.”

RPCHC Community Health Worker



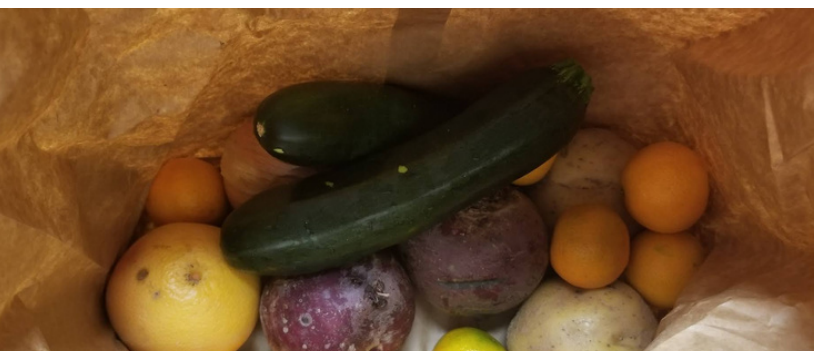
THE PHOTOVOICE PROJECT

We launched the PhotoVoice project to explore how the pandemic has impacted the lives of our clients, particularly their access to food, housing, income, education, health, safety and more. With the support of three outreach ambassadors, we were able to secure the participation of some of our harder to reach clients. Each participant received a food gift card and tokens to acknowledge their contribution.

“Covid-19 taught us what business[es] are essential services and who are [the] real hero[es] in our society.”

PhotoVoice project participant

Photo depicts postering the community for 10 paid emergency leave days for all essential workers if they are sick.



Approximately

50 participants

from various backgrounds and life experiences submitted pictures to the PhotoVoice Project

OUR VALUES

EQUITY/SOCIAL JUSTICE

We oppose discrimination and oppression everywhere, in all their forms.

RESPECT AND DIGNITY

We value, accept and include all individuals for who they are.

ACCESSIBILITY

We commit to responsive, culturally safe and stigma-free services.

EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

We embrace effective practices and create novel solutions to improve services.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are responsible for the resources entrusted to us. We act ethically and with integrity.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

We embed community engagement and decision-making at all levels.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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RPCHC is a proud member of the Alliance for Healthier Communities



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