

TORONTO NEIGHBOURHOODS RESEARCH NETWORK

March 5, 2007

Third Meeting, United Way of Greater Toronto

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MEMBER UPDATES

United Way of Greater Toronto

www.unitedwaytoronto.com

- The Toronto City Summit Alliance (www.torontoalliance.ca) has produced a paper on neighbourhoods, which was discussed at its meeting on Tuesday, February 27 (see www.torontoalliance.ca/summit_2007/pdf/Neighbourhoods_Long_Paper.pdf). The United Way is participating in the discussion of the recommendations.
- Priority neighbourhoods: The United Way, working with the Ministry of Health, is helping create community hubs to provide both health and community services in eight of the 13 priority neighbourhoods (see www.uwgt.org/who_we_help/social_issues.html). The neighbourhoods include Crescent Town, Weston–Mt. Dennis, Westminster–Branson and Eglinton East.
- Action for Neighbourhood Change (which is modelled on a successful resident-led community revitalization pilot project of the same name in Scarborough Village) is supporting the creation of resident-led associations for outreach and engagement in several of the priority neighbourhoods, including Eglinton–East–Kennedy Park, Lawrence Heights, Steeles–L'Amoreaux, and Weston–Mt. Dennis. ANC will also be working in four more neighbourhoods soon, but it takes time to set up local site teams. An evaluation of this work is due at the end of March. The process begins with meetings with residents to learn about the neighbourhood and define boundaries. Workers use neighbourhood profiles based on 2001 census data as a communications tool. Health profiles would be desirable, but are not yet feasible.

City of Toronto

www.toronto.ca

- The creation of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Gun Violence is a response to the Jane Creba shooting in December 2005. the focus is on youth, safety and crime. The Working Group is gathering non-census data on 10 or 12 indicators such as incarceration rates or college applications, for an environmental scan of the 13 priority neighbourhoods. The group is also applying for crime data from the police, although the intent is to broaden the initiative beyond simply crime. A report will probably be produced in the late summer or fall.
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- The City is preparing a housing report and gathering housing indicators. This project is just getting under way. The intent is to look beyond homelessness, which the City has tracked for years, to housing needs and issues. The indicators will include rent levels, vacancy rates, CMHC data, tenant profiles, and data from emergency shelters.
- Toronto is one of 22 cities participating in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Quality of Life monitoring initiative (see www.fcm.ca/english/qol/qol.html). An annual report is planned. The indicators are focus primarily on the environment, secondly on crime and safety.
- The federal government has signed a memorandum of understanding with the World Bank in Washington to develop and monitor city performance indicators (see www.infrastructure.gc.ca/communities-collectivites/other_init/gc_wb_mou_e.shtml). Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal will participate in this initiative, although Toronto has suggested including other cities. Social development indicators may be included.
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is developing poverty indicators. This initiative involves both the City and the province.
- The City of Toronto website maintains a social atlas (www.toronto.ca/demographics/atlas.htm). The intention is to link with other websites that have relevant data.

Community Social Planning Council

www.socialplanningtoronto.org

- An evaluation of the Mt. Dennis neighbourhood is just getting under way now.

Wellesley Institute

<http://wellesleyinstitute.com>

- The Institute is contributing to a detailed study of St. Jamestown, looking at neighbourhood effects on health. This project is in the development phase, and an application has been made to the Social Science and Humanities Research Council for a CURA (Community University Research Alliance) grant.

Urban Studies Program, Innis College, University of Toronto

www.utoronto.ca/innis/urban/index.html

- The College offers an internship program, which places 20 students for one day a week for a year with city agencies. For more information, contact Dr. Shauna Brail, Director, Urban Studies Placement Program, shauna.brail@utoronto.ca.
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Centre for Urban Health Initiatives

www.cuhi.utoronto.ca

- Ten seed grants, totalling \$20,000 have been awarded to study subjects such as the health of immigrants in Mississauga, tobacco use in the lesbian/gay/transgendered community, etc. (for a description of the projects, see www.cuhi.utoronto.ca/research/neighbourhoodrig.html).
- On February 28, CUHI hosted a well-attended event on “Community-Based Participatory Research Partnerships for Health” (see www.cuhi.utoronto.ca/seminars/Spotlight%20on%20Urban%20Health.html)
- CUHI offers an award for community-based research (deadline: March 19). For more information, see www.cuhi.utoronto.ca/funding/competitions.html.
- On May 10, there will be a policy workshop on the role of neighbourhoods in the development of social and health policy, with St. Christopher House staff, Russell Mawby, and Jim Dunn.
- Community internship program: this program offers a community service agency staff member release time from work, half-time for one year. This position provides an opportunity for a community member to learn skills in urban health research by being involved in the Centre’s research projects.

Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network

www.torontocentrallhin.on.ca

- The Toronto Central LHIN is currently looking at ways to engage neighbourhoods, particular small neighbourhoods.

Greater Toronto Urban Observatory, University of Toronto

www.urbancentre.utoronto.ca/gtuo

- On Thursday, March 8. David Hulchanski will be speaking to a breakfast meeting of the Canadian Urban Institute about neighbourhood research. The title of his talk will be “Ghettos of the rich and the poor: Is this where Toronto is headed? Mapping neighbourhood change since the 1970s” (see www.canurb.com/media/emarketing/roundtable_march8.htm). The PowerPoint slides from his talk will be available on the GTUO website.
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Inner City Health Research Unit (ICHRU), St. Michael's Hospital

www.stmikes.ca/content/research/ichru/about_ichru.asp

- The Inner City Health Research Unit of the Centre for Research on Inner City Health at St. Michael's Hospital is creating a health database, using administrative data from hospitals. The first initiative is an urban diabetes atlas, produced with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (www.ices.on.ca). Later initiatives will include atlases of mental health, respiratory health, and child health. The atlas will eventually cover all of Ontario.
- The Canadian Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada (www.statcan.ca/english/concepts/health) is conducted every two years. It is intended to provide cross-sectional estimates of health determinants, health status and health system use for 136 health regions across Canada. The survey deals with any service that creates a medical billing (to OHIP in Ontario, for example) and does not catch health services provided less formally through community agencies.

United Way of Canada Vitality Index

www.unitedwaytoronto.com

- There will be a two-day symposium based on the findings of the Vitality Index, which was described in a presentation by Diane Dyson at the last meeting (see minutes from November 27, 2006).

Toronto District School Board

www.tdsb.on.ca

- The Learning Opportunities Index looks at student needs. It was described in a presentation by Rob Brown at the last meeting (see minutes from November 27, 2006).
 - The Inner City Model Schools projects creates community hubs in schools. Three schools (Willow Park Public School, Nelson Mandela Park Public School, and Firgrove Public School) were selected in the first phase of the project in February 2006, and four more will be added this year.
 - TDSB will also be conducting a student census in 2007. This survey will gather information about the daily lives of students.
 - A participant asked about research at the Toronto Catholic School Board; the group agreed that a representative should be invited to the next meeting.
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St. Christopher House

www.stchrishouse.org

- The Growing Gap, an initiative of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, has just published “The Rich and the Rest of Us” (see http://policyalternatives.ca/documents/National_Office_Pubs/2007/The_Rich_and_the_Rest_of_Us.pdf). It is a national report, but the information is relevant to neighbourhood researchers.

Ministry of Children & Youth Services

www.children.gov.on.ca

- The Ministry is working in at-risk neighbourhoods in Toronto, to improve outcomes for youth at risk of becoming involved in unhealthy or risky behaviours. The strategy includes enhancing mentorship programs, job-readiness, employment programs and skills training and youth leadership.
- The Ministry has hired 35 youth outreach workers who will build relationships with hard-to-reach youth, provide advice, advocate for them and connect them to appropriate services.
- The Youth Challenge Fund is a \$15-million fund that supports community initiatives for youth at risk.

Community University Research Alliance

www.urbancentre.utoronto.ca/cura

- The CURA project is working on indicators of neighbourhood change. Maps that interpret the data are available on the website.
- Special tabulations have been ordered from Statistics Canada on ethnic groups to gather detail beyond the visible minority categories, for example, to better understand the very diverse South Asian population in Toronto.
- A research bulletin on Little Portugal by Carlos Teixeira will be published and posted on the website shortly.

Metropolis

<http://canada.metropolis.net/>

- In 2006, CMHC published a series on the housing experiences of immigrants in Canada. The volumes include a literature review, and one volume each on Toronto, Montreal, and
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Vancouver. The information is derived from Metropolis research. The volumes can be ordered from CMHC or downloaded from the web. Titles include: *Immigrants and housing : a review of Canadian literature from 1990 to 2005* ([ftp://ftp.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/chic-ccdhd/Research_Reports-Rapports_de_recherche/eng_unilingual/CHIC-Immigrants\(w\).pdf](ftp://ftp.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/chic-ccdhd/Research_Reports-Rapports_de_recherche/eng_unilingual/CHIC-Immigrants(w).pdf)) and *The housing situation and needs of recent immigrants in the Toronto CMA* ([ftp://ftp.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/chic-ccdhd/Research_Reports-Rapports_de_recherche/eng_unilingual/CHIC_Housing\(w\).pdf](ftp://ftp.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/chic-ccdhd/Research_Reports-Rapports_de_recherche/eng_unilingual/CHIC_Housing(w).pdf))

PRESENTATIONS

Handouts of the presentations are available from TNRN. Only a few key points are summarized here.

Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network

www.torontocentrallhin.on.ca

Diane Patychuk

- Local Health Integration Networks are responsible for coordination, not service delivery.
- Of the nine current focus areas, the first is mental health.
- Research includes the relationship between income level and health status.
- Toronto is divided into seven neighbourhood areas, for which health statistics are available.
- More information at www.ourplanforhealth.ca, sponsored by the Ministry for Health and Long-Term Care. Go to “Downloads” for a list of fact sheets and research papers.

Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre

www.accessalliance.ca

Yogendra Shakya

- Access Alliance provides health care services to immigrants and refugees.
 - It began with a research project on homeless immigrants, which led to interpretation services in shelters and settlement workers connecting with homeless shelters.
 - Current research looks at social determinants of the health of newcomers, as well as the effects of inequalities, barriers to settlement, and racism. The research is intended to inform services provided to immigrants.
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- Current proposals for future research include Newcomer Youth and Mental Health, and the Role of Health Interpreters.
- Neighbourhood profiles are available on the Access Alliance website.

Toronto Community Health Profiles

www.torontohealthprofiles.ca

Diane Patychuk

- These profiles are produced through collaboration among Toronto Public Health, Toronto District Health Council, St. Michael's Hospital, Wellesley Central, South East Toronto Project.
- Research includes social determinants of health, health disparities, and neighbourhoods that do not fit the prevailing health patterns (called "off-diagonal neighbourhoods" they are those that have higher or lower levels of health problems than other neighbourhoods with similar risk conditions).
- The website offers a series of thematic maps on different health indicators (see www.torontohealthprofiles.ca/thematicMaps.php).

St. Michael's, Intensive Research on Neighbourhoods and Health Initiative (IRONhI)

Jim Dunn

- Toronto-IRONhI is a piece of research infrastructure that allows for comparative case studies of differences in "health opportunity structures" between low-income and upper-income neighbourhoods in Toronto.
 - Current research includes adult mental health and addictions; use of resources that affect health; and ethnicity, immigration, poverty, neighbourhoods, and health.
 - Future research will include collecting primary data on neighbourhoods, recruiting neighbourhood residents to participate in concept mapping of health attributes of the neighbourhoods; a community survey on health status, risk factors, and common diseases.
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Next meeting: June 11, 2007, 9:30am

Location: The Wellesley Institute, 45 Charles St. E, Suite 101, Toronto

Topic: Neighbourhood Perspectives on the Growing Income Gap

Presentations by:

- Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto
- Community Social Planning Council
- City of Toronto
- Toronto District School Board

Presenters to send a one- or two-page summary to David Hulchanski in advance

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***Remainder of 2007 schedule: September 24, and November 26, 2007***

**Location of September 24 meeting (tentative): St. Michael's Hospital**