



SOMERSET WEST
COMMUNITY
HEALTH
CENTRE

Annual Report
2015/16

Syrian refugee children during a playgroup at the Radisson Hotel, March 2016.

Our *Mission*

We support people and communities to enjoy the best possible health and well-being.

We do this by providing primary health care and social services, and promoting access to the social conditions that influence health such as housing, food security, employment and civic engagement.

We remove barriers to accessing services for people who are vulnerable because of their age, income, abilities, sexual orientation or gender identity, and language or culture.

Our *Beliefs*

Everyone matters.

Diversity makes our community stronger.

We are all connected.

Health is a state of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being.

Positive change is created in many different ways.

The essence of community is the ability to care and share with everyone.

How We *Act on Our Beliefs*

We ensure our voice and actions speak to social justice, human rights and health equity.

We empower people to improve their community and the broader society.

We continuously learn from and with our clients and community.

—Approved by the Board of Directors – March 23, 2016



SOMERSET WEST
COMMUNITY
HEALTH
CENTRE

Contents



Letter from the Chairperson of the Board **2**

Message from the Executive Director **3**

Refugee Health **4**

Annual Highlights **6**

By the Numbers **8**

Volunteers and Funders **9**

SWCHC Board of Directors **Back cover**

Where to Find Us **Back cover**

Letter from the *Chairperson of the Board*



The 2015/16 Somerset West Community Health Centre (SWCHC) year had many highlights! These range from saying “hello” to Syrian refugees and getting ready to say “goodbye” to our long-serving Executive Director. We started working on developing our 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, looked at what opportunities exist for Somerset West residents with newly proposed health system changes, and focused advocacy efforts on rooming houses and food security. We also continued to improve the quality of our services for all clients of SWCHC!

A major project for SWCHC this year was Refugee 613, a short-term project to coordinate refugee resettlement efforts in Ottawa during the Syrian refugee crisis. SWCHC took the lead to partner with other Ottawa Community Health Centres (CHCs) to respond directly to the health needs of Syrian refugees. Staff worked above and beyond the call to meet the multiple demands of hundreds of Syrian refugees, in addition to their regular work. Well done!

In January, Jack McCarthy, our Executive Director for the past 27 years, announced he would be retiring in July 2016. The Board was quick to launch the process for recruiting a new Executive Director who will soon take over the leadership of SWCHC.

In December 2015, the Ontario government announced significant changes to its provincial healthcare system that will impact how and what CHCs do in the future. It is early days still, but the Board is considering this new landscape as we work to finish our 2017-2020 Strategic Plan.

One of SWCHC’s main strengths remains our advocacy for social justice and health equity. Currently, we are focusing on advocating for a better living standard in rooming houses in our community and food security for the growing number of residents who are food insecure.

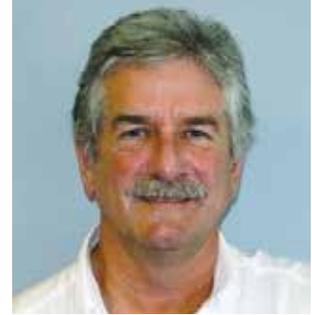
Our main funder, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, requires us to collect a lot of data. In the past year, this has allowed us to continue to monitor the quality of our services and ensure that we focus on areas where we want to improve outcomes for our clients.

I want to thank all our Board members for their diligent work and acknowledge the exemplary staff of SWCHC!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dick Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dick Stewart
Board Chair

Message from the *Executive Director*



This will be my last Executive Director's report for the Annual Report of Somerset West Community Health Centre (SWCHC).

To think I started back in the summer of 1989! Excitement then was mounting to build a new centre which subsequently became our site at 55 Eccles Street. What a thrill it was to engage the community on building a new community health centre that would be welcoming to everyone. To think I got to repeat the experience some 22 years later when we opened our Rosemount Branch at 30 Rosemount Avenue in the western part of our catchment area. These two branches will be around for generations to come providing health and social services to people in this community.

Over the years I have had the pleasure of working with amazing staff and members of our Board of Directors. Team work built on trust ensured we all worked well together to get things done. We were never shy on being innovators as we developed new and creative programs in response to the ever-changing needs of our community. We excelled with our inter-professional practice model which is at the heart of what a community health centre is all about. It was a privilege for me to work with such compassionate people, who went out of their way day in and day out, to ensure that everyone who needed our help truly matters.

And we were not shy in speaking publicly to issues of social justice. Helping refugees get the health care they need, advocating for harm reduction programs and promoting food security for people on low income are just a few of the issues where we demanded justice for people facing significant barriers to accessing health and social services. Our advocacy work made us leaders!

I once was a young high school student who volunteered at an after-four school program. I then got the bug that I wanted to become a social worker. Community development became my passion and as luck would have it, before too long I became the third Executive Director of SWCHC. The years have flown by. I am truly humble and grateful for SWCHC being such a big part of my life's journey.

May the walls of SWCHC always echo with the voices of compassion, laughter and people coming together to make the community... indeed the world... a better place.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack McCarthy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jack McCarthy
Executive Director, 1989–2016

Refugee Health

This year, we're proud to say that we took a leadership role in welcoming many Syrian refugee families to Ottawa. As a member of **Refugee 613** and working with colleagues in the settlement sector, SWCHC provided essential, urgent primary care support to Syrian refugees at one of three temporary lodging sites in Ottawa – the Radisson Hotel. Along with other Ottawa Community Health Centres (CHCs) and the Bruyère Family Medicine Centre, we worked together and adapted our services to provide the right care at the right time in the right place.

What's Refugee 613?

Refugee 613 is a grassroots organization that coordinated Ottawa's Syrian refugee resettlement efforts. The Health Task Force of Refugee 613, of which SWCHC is a founding member, brought together Ottawa's six CHCs, the Bruyère Family Medicine Centre, CHEO, Ottawa Public Health, the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and many other partners to provide coordinated healthcare for refugees. This work would not be possible without the support of the Champlain LHIN who provided one-time funding to address the urgent health needs of refugees temporarily housed at hotels. Of the \$245,000 the LHIN provided to six agencies across Ottawa, SWCHC received over \$103,000.

"We're pleased to have taken a leadership role by working with Refugee 613 to provide the best healthcare possible to Ottawa's refugee population. When it was needed, we stood up and worked quickly with partners to do the right thing"

— Jack McCarthy, Executive Director and Co-chair of the Refugee 613 Health Task Force



{ REFUGEE } 613

Somerset West CHC was pivotal to the creation and success of Refugee 613. Early on, they saw the need for collaboration across sectors to ensure Ottawa does the best job it can in resettling this large influx of refugees. Their leadership and passion continue to inform and inspire our efforts.

- Louisa Taylor, Director, Refugee 613



Life at the Radisson Hotel

From January to April 2016, a typical day for a SWCHC nurse practitioner (NP) started at the Radisson Hotel where hundreds of Syrian refugees were temporarily housed while waiting for permanent homes in Ottawa.

Working out of a suite turned medical clinic, an NP was on-site to provide essential healthcare to the hundreds of newly-arrived Syrian refugees. With the support of Arabic interpreters, NPs saw up to 20 people per day for acute conditions like influenza and gastroenteritis. To treat chronic health conditions and to provide longer-term healthcare, our NPs referred refugees to new hub clinics at SWCHC, Centretown CHC and the Bruyère Family

Refugee Health

Medicine Centre while refugees waited to relocate to permanent housing. At that time, our providers worked through the Ottawa Newcomer Health Centre (ONHC) to help refugees find a primary care provider close to their new home.

“It was a rewarding experience to work in the medical clinic at the Radisson Hotel! As I met clients in the clinic and heard about their journey and their loss, I was impressed by their courage and resilience to continue and hope for the future. I felt proud to be part of this historical event.”

— Paula, Nurse Practitioner

Early Childhood Development

Our Children and Youth team also responded quickly to the refugee resettlement effort to provide early childhood services at the Radisson Hotel. Young children and their families attended hours of play, singing and connecting in a safe and supportive environment.

The playgroups were part of the ‘umbrella’ to assist in monitoring the overall health status of refugee children at critical periods of growth. Playgroups were also a platform to engage with parents and provide them with



information in their language about community resources for health and wellness, such as community health centres, libraries and recreational programs.

“I am so proud to work for an organization that prioritizes people. In a world where people are less empathetic toward each other, the chance to “walk in someone else’s shoes” for even the time frame of a playgroup is a gift. It is a lucky thing to be allowed to enter someone’s life and to help provide for their basic needs and for a few moments of normalcy.”

— Kim, Registered Early Childhood Educator

By being nimble and wrapping services around the health needs of refugees, SWCHC provided health and social services that were effective and client-centred, and supported the Syrian refugee population in Ottawa to enjoy the best possible health and well-being.



Annual *Highlights*

MarketMobile at Laroche Park

In June 2015, MarketMobile launched a site in our community at Laroche Park! MarketMobile is a city-wide grocery store on wheels. It was started by several community health centres and community partners in Ottawa to deliver food that is both healthy and affordable to neighbourhoods where fresh food is hard to find. We're thrilled to be coordinating the Laroche Park site of MarketMobile!



The Walk-In Counselling Clinic

This year, in partnership with Jewish Family Services (JFS), we launched a new mental health program – The Walk-In Counselling Clinic. The walk-in offers counselling to individuals, couples, and families in Cantonese, Mandarin and English every Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. With no referral required, clients are seen on a first come, first serve basis!

Support for Transgender Population

This year we supported Centretown Community Health Centre's regional program to improve access to primary care for members of the transgender community. A SWCHC counsellor was designated as one of only four CHC counsellors in Ottawa to do psychosocial assessments for trans-people seeking hormone replacement therapy. The assessment is a minimum of six sessions to assess a person's gender identity issues, ensure they are making an informed consent to medical treatment, and make recommendations for treatment to the primary care provider or endocrinologist.

African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) Community Development & HIV Health Initiative

Our ACB program participated in a number of outreach opportunities this year to increase HIV awareness. These included health promotion at summer festivals, an event to celebrate Multiculturalism Day in June (organized in partnership with the Uganda Association of Ottawa), initiatives marking World AIDS Day and HIV Awareness Week in December, and an ACB Health Symposium in February for service providers. The program also participated in a number of community meetings and workshops including the launch of Black History Month and the proclamation by the City of Ottawa of February 7th as ACB HIV Awareness Day!

Lung Health Program

In November 2015, we celebrated the relocation of our Lung Health Program to the Rosemount Branch (30 Rosemount Avenue)! The newly renovated suite includes a bright gym that clients use to exercise and work with staff to improve their lung health.



We also received a new oxygen concentrator from ProResp this year, which means that clients requiring the use of an oxygen tank during their exercise no longer have to bring their own heavy tanks with them. Thank you ProResp!

Annual *Highlights*

Harm Reduction Peer Involvement

This year we took the lead on bringing together a working group of service providers and peer organizations to look at increasing the involvement of people who use drugs in all aspects of harm reduction service design and delivery. We conducted focus groups across the city and learned about current practices in the peer distribution of harm reduction supplies, as well as suggestions to enhance peer distribution in the future. We are working on this initiative with Ottawa Public Health, Sandy Hill and Centretown CHC's, the AIDS Committee of Ottawa, Inner City Health and the Drug Users' Advocacy League.

Trauma-Informed Care

SWCHC received a generous \$5,000 donation in 2015 from I.D.A. Enterprise, which was matched by local businessman Tony Boghossian, owner of Bell Pharmacy. The \$10,000 will be used to train staff in providing trauma-informed care. Trauma-informed care recognizes that people experience different traumatic events, including emotional and physical abuse and neglect, and that trauma survivors can be re-traumatized by well-meaning caregivers and community service providers. This investment will ensure that our providers and the care we deliver is trauma-informed and promotes healing and growth.

Health Toolkit for Refugees

As part of our work with Refugee 613, SWCHC has developed a highly popular toolkit to give sponsors and local healthcare providers essential information to support refugees. It serves as a guide for healthcare providers, sponsors and refugees to connect to appropriate and timely health services and information. Topics include immunizations, community resources (pharmacy, dental and optometry services), available interpretation services

and healthcare coverage. The toolkit was shared widely across the city and the province. Well done to SWCHC's Siffan Rahman for creating this essential resource!

Partnership with Housing Help

This year we partnered with Housing Help to bring one of their staff on-site at our Eccles Branch to improve our ability to address the housing issues of our clients. Housing Help is a non-profit agency that helps people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, access and maintain appropriate and affordable housing. Services include one-on-one support to help individuals and families retain their housing and support for tenants in addressing maintenance issues. This partnership also means better information for SWCHC staff on housing issues.

Nurse Practitioners

At SWCHC, we love the role of Nurse Practitioners (NPs)! Historically, NPs could not refer clients to specialists – referrals had to be signed by a physician. In 2015 however, OHIP's definition of a consultation was amended to recognize a referral from physicians or NPs. This is a huge step in the provincial government's recognition of the contribution NPs make to the health care system!

Children & Youth Programs

We partnered with Mothercraft Ottawa, Ontario Early Years Centre, and Centretown Community Health Centre to provide essential early childhood development services as part of the resettlement support to Ottawa's Syrian refugee population. Early childhood educators and support staff ran lively playgroups four days a week at the Radisson hotel where refugees were temporarily housed.



Annual *Highlights*

Community Health Promotion

In 2016, we received a grant from the City of Ottawa for \$18,500 to support Community Development Framework activities in Rochester Heights and Mechanicsville! These funds will support work to increase resident engagement in both neighbourhoods and the development and maintenance of community action plans.

Making Voices Count

As part of the Making Voices Count project, women ambassadors from the SWCHC community were trained to plan a number of outreach activities in the fall of 2015 around the federal election. Making Voices Count is jointly sponsored by the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres (of which SWCHC is a member) and City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) to increase civic engagement and promote discussion about electoral issues. Key issues for the federal election included affordable housing, affordable childcare, food security, employment, safe and affordable transit, and poverty reduction.

Rochester Heights Community House

The Rochester Heights Community House after-school program was very well attended throughout the year. Among many exciting activities, the kids enjoyed very popular weekly art classes provided by The Ottawa School of art, a long-established partner of SWCHC!



By the *Numbers*

3,004 new clients

13,321 clients receiving primary care or mental health services

Primary care provided to **314** Syrian refugees

3,091 people made **7,816** visits to our walk-in clinics

80 NESI peers worked **1,042** hours

4,399 counselling appointments

545 children and **419** parents, grandparents and caregivers attended playgroups

1,225 flu shots given

63 groups held a total of **1,051** sessions



Volunteers

To all our dedicated volunteers... thank you! You make running our programs and services possible and without you, we simply couldn't do it. Thank you for your time and commitment to building a healthy and vibrant community.

Meet John, volunteer extraordinaire!



Every Wednesday morning you'll find John driving Vietnamese seniors around the city. Why? He volunteers as a driver for our senior's shopping group. John starts the day by picking up a group of clients from their homes or our Eccles Branch and with everyone in the van, it's off to the store to stock up on the week's groceries!

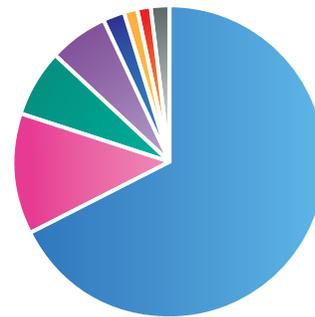
A sense of pride that comes from being of service to our community's elderly is what keeps John engaged. He says he enjoys accommodating clients and building relationships week over week.

John – thanks for being a SWCHC volunteer for over 16 years!



Funders

We wish to thank the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for their continued support. Our thanks also to Brighter Futures, Canadian Heritage, the Canadian Mental Health Association, Canadian Mothercraft, the City of Ottawa, the Community Foundation of Ottawa, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, the Ottawa Catholic School Board, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the RBC Foundation, TELUS Community Investment and Engagement, the Trillium Foundation, the United Way and many more who help keep our programs and services running in the communities where they are most needed.



- **\$7,287,053**
Champlain Local Health Integration Network
- **\$241,604**
Other Community Health Centre Led Initiatives
- **\$1,360,619**
City of Ottawa
- **\$155,628**
Canadian Mental Health Association
- **\$737,896**
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- **\$143,421**
United Way
- **\$660,427**
Other Sources
- **\$186,544**
Other Ministries

REVENUE GROWTH/DECLINE

2015-16 Revenue	\$ 10,773,193
2014-15 Revenue	\$ 10,911,792
Growth/Decline	\$ (138,599)
As %	-1.3%

Audited financial statements are available on our website at www.swchc.on.ca.

SWCHC Board of *Directors*

Dick Stewart *Chairperson*

William Lau *Vice Chairperson*

Margarite Keeley *Secretary*

Michel Frojmovic *Treasurer*

Valerie Adams, Victoria Cole, Hanaa Dwidar, Israel Gimba,
Ana Garcia Grande, Grant Holly, Priscilla Hudon, Chad Meda,
Thi Bach Mai Nguyen, Sally Rutherford, Phil Brown (deceased)

Chantal Layoun *Non-Voting Staff Representative*

Kimberly Vandermeer *Non-Voting Staff Representative*



Where to *Find Us*

Eccles Branch

55 Eccles Street
Ottawa, ON
K1R 6S3

Rosemount Branch

30 Rosemount Avenue
Ottawa, ON
K1Y 1P4

 **613-238-8210**

 **www.swchc.on.ca**

