



Guelph CHC
growing healthy together



Ontario

Healthy Living Peer Leader Project Description

Project Partners:

Ontario Government, Onward Willow Better Beginnings Better Futures and Brant Ave. Neighbourhood Group

Project Summary:

In Guelph, as in the rest of Ontario, the rates of chronic disease are on the rise. This general trend across the population is even more exaggerated within communities where poverty is high. The Onward Willow and Brant Neighbourhoods of Guelph are communities in which residents face barriers to health and well-being related to the determinants of health (ie. low income, new immigrant to Canada, language barriers, food insecurity). The Healthy Living Leadership Initiative is designed to increase the capacity of these two communities to address chronic disease issues and provide accessible peer-led chronic disease prevention programs, thereby improving the health status of low income adults. The afore-mentioned goals will be accomplished by utilizing a variety of health promotion strategies, key amongst them being strengthening community action, reorienting health services and developing personal skills.

Healthy Living Leader Initiative will involve developing and implementing general chronic disease risk factor training and providing supporting resources. The focus of the resources and training will be on topics of general healthy living messages including physical activity, healthy eating, tobacco use, mental health and substance abuse. As a complement to the general, multi-risk-factor training, advanced manuals and training on the topics of physical activity and nutrition will also be completed. Peer-leaders will also be offered first aid/CPR training and empowerment evaluation training which will increase their leadership skills, confidence and capacity to advocate for health issues. In order to increase access to chronic disease prevention programs in low-income neighbourhoods, the peer-leaders will then offer peer-led programs. In year two the initiative will be expanded to the Brant neighbourhood and potentially to other neighbourhood groups, thereby strengthening community action and capacity.

Healthy Living Peer Leadership Project Timelines

April 2010

- A Chronic Disease Information Night was held and over 30 community members attended

May 2010

- 18 peer leaders were recruited. 14 from the Onward Willow neighbourhood, 4 from the Brant Ave. neighbourhood
- A physical activity training manual was developed
- Health eating resources were developed
- Peer leaders attended Guelph CHC volunteer orientation

June 2010

- 18 peer leaders received the following training;
 - One day of training on physical activity on June 5th, 2010
 - Half day of training on healthy eating on June 12th, 2010
 - Half day of training on leadership skills on June 12th, 2010
 - One day of training on emergency first aid and CPR on June 19th, 2010
 - A 2 hour workshop on label reading on July 13th, 2010
- Evaluations were completed by peer leaders at all training sessions

July/August/September 2010

- The peer leaders participated in several prioritization sessions to determine which peer lead programs they are going to implement in their community.
 - Onward Willow has chosen to implement a peer lead walking group/DVD exercise classes and monthly dances. The walking group started on October 7th and the dances will begin in January 2011.
 - Brant Ave. Neighbourhood Group has chosen to implement a peer lead walking group/DVD exercise classes and a program called Little Chefs which is a nutrition and physical activity program for children aged 3-6 and their families. The walking group will start on October 28th and Little Chefs program will begin in January 2011

October 2010

- Onward Willow Peers began evening walking group. Three to eleven people attend on a weekly basis.
- Brant Peers began morning walking group. This program has since been placed on hold.

November 2010

- Potluck supper and celebration of light

December 2010

- New peer leaders recruited. They will undergo a self directed learning process, mentoring and review of information by program coordinator and peer leaders and also receive first aid and CPR training

January 2011

- Full day participatory evaluation training for peers
- Focus group with Brant Ave. neighbourhood to determine desired winter physical activities
- Little Chefs program will begin in Brant Ave. neighbourhood.

March 2011

- Program coordinator and one peer leader are presenting at the PARC (Physical Activity Resource Centre) Conference in Toronto
- Peer leader volunteer recognition and label Reading workshop to be held on March 10th, 2011
- Peer leader webpage added to Guelph CHC site