

Nurses are Coaches



Mac SOC (McMaster Student Outreach Collaborative) began with a small group of nursing students and faculty members driving a beat up red van around the streets of downtown Hamilton. They went in search of people who needed care. The students wanted experience outside the clinical setting and the faculty wanted to support them. Students hoped to make a positive impact in their local community. It turns out, the group didn't have to look far. From men addicted to Listerine hunkered down in a stairwell.....to lone parents new to Canada, there was an abundance of people whom they could help.

Before long, MAC SOC partnered with St. John's Evangelical Church to become an integral part of volunteer programs for those in our city who are living in poverty. Its mandate - to feed people who are hungry, bring clothes to those in need and offer health education,

advocacy, support and assistance for those who are homeless, poor and socially marginalized while respecting the dignity and worth of every individual. To reach out to people that may otherwise "fall through the cracks".

Over the years, faculty, staff and community members have watched connections develop between the students and those they serve. Mac SOC students and faculty are – an ear that listens, a hand that helps, a mind that inquires, a heart that provides a renewed sense of hope, and a voice that reminds those who face challenges that they are stronger than they think. Mac SOC represents a fundamental part of what it means to be a healer – and that is to be a COACH. As one client said "Mac SOC is about "helping people... a place to go... talking with people..."

What are students COACHING about? In 2004, a survey, *Health Needs Assessment and Recommendations for Improving the Health of Those Experiencing Homelessness in Hamilton*, of more than 300 individuals was conducted by Mac SOC faculty to determine the health status of people who are homeless in Hamilton. From the study the most frequently occurring problems were one or more of: high blood pressure, angina or other cardiovascular problems; chronic respiratory problems (excluding asthma); asthma; diagnosed mental illness; and high rates of stress, anxiety and depression among participants. With more than 1/2 of people not having enough energy to get through the day; 1/3 of re-

spondents reported eating only one meal a day and 1/3 experiencing pain from hunger in the previous month, MAC SOC students COACH 70 people per week (on average); most of whom are living with chronic physical and/or mental health concerns as reported above.

Mac SOC has grown to include students from many disciplines, has become an MSU student club and relies on donors and fundraising with 100% of donations going directly to clients. Donors include: SON Holiday 50/50; Farncombe Staff; Albert Snow, and community members through Operation Shoebox. Past fundraising events include the Cut -A- Thon and Mac SOC Auction with the late Jack Layton. Junior students are COACHED by senior students to take on various roles leading to serving on the Executive Committee. Upon graduation, many students go on to do outreach work in their home communities and most are involved in working in some capacity with pressing issues facing their communities. Mac SOC is a program that enriches the lives of everyone involved. And it's uniquely McMaster. Why? Because Mac SOC makes a difference in the lives of its members and in the lives of others. **For further information:** http://nursing.mcmaster.ca/community_macsoc.html



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Dyanne Semogas & Laurie Kennedy

Nurses are Surveyors



Nurses at McMaster School of Nursing (SON) are SURVEYORS when they gather information to learn about the places where people live work and play. From conducting Community Assessments; to assisting neighbourhood Local Planning Teams to SURVEY their neighbourhoods *in Health in the Hubs: Neighbours and Nurses Working Together*; to working with the City of Hamilton to gather opinions on the Neighbourhood Action Plans, the SON continues to examine and record the impact of place on the well-being of its residents.

1

- Where are priority neighbourhoods located in the City of Hamilton?

2

- Where are students receiving community service learning and professional practice placement experience in the City of Hamilton in relation to priority neighbourhoods?

3

- What criteria are used to determine a quality professional placement?



Combining our knowledge of working with priority neighbourhoods in the City with curriculum development the SON together with the School of Geography and Earth Sciences is applying GIS technology to map and measure student service learning and professional practice placements. This research examines where students are obtaining community experiences in relation to City identified “priority” neighbourhoods. Knowing that emerging roles/future directions for nurses point to: primary care; home, hospice, transitional care; as well as public and community healthcare, the SON is committed to ensuring that its graduates are exposed to diverse populations. In addition the SON is positioning itself to make evidence-informed decisions about the extent of its reach in the local community. Generating this knowledge can assist the SON’s response to local and national demographic trends and to future directions for health care delivery.

SURVEYING students about what they think constitutes quality in a professional practice placement is an additional project. Results will tell us what direction to enhance student-centred learning. This project has the potential to provide opportunities for new partnerships for learning with organizations in the City and beyond.

For further information: <http://nursing.mcmaster.ca/documents/Phase1report.pdf>

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Nurses are Navigators



The 2012-2014 Creating Access to Screening and Training in the Living Environment (CASTLE) project funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada exemplifies how nurses at McMaster are NAVIGATORS. Focused on addressing barriers to Cancer Screening (CS) for people living in priority neighbourhoods, this project brought together Hamilton residents; McMaster faculty and students; Niagara, Haldimand-Norfolk, Brant public health units; Brock University students; and nurses from Cancer Care Ontario in a unique collaboration.

Together this group of nurses and neighbours:

- ◆ Hosted 29 Hamilton residents in 5 focus groups living in priority neighbourhoods where the majority of residents do not get cancer screening
- ◆ Developed messages and interventions based on Hamilton resident's comments in the focus groups
- ◆ Reached 39,618 people
- ◆ Developed cancer screening awareness materials from residents' comments
- ◆ Hired and trained 6 community member to work full-time as Community Health Brokers (CHB)
- ◆ Promoted cancer screening for breast, cervix and colorectal cancers in under- or never-screened groups, living in priority communities
- ◆ Found 245 people intending to screen and 242 people going for screening as a result of CASTLE
- ◆ Improved the health and well-being of community members through 1,671 significant conversations with CHB's
- ◆ Produced an online toolkit to share ideas, materials and a training manual.

We know from the literature that Nurse NAVIGATORS apply hands on and communication strategies to be successful in reaching out to communities. Among the tasks and relational work these NAVIGATORS accomplished: building capacity amongst neighbours; strengthening relationships between residents and health providers; offered 5 of 6 residents' full-time employment; supported small businesses for contributions to community events; connected residents to social supports and contributed to neighbourhood planning activities.



A CHB remarked:

"Dorothy came to my table, a big grin on her face, and said 'I did it, I booked my mammogram.' She had gone in with a friend and the two of them booked at the same time. I have been talking to Dorothy since sometime in June, keeping tabs on her progress, hearing from her each step as she took it. So different from the woman who said 'it doesn't matter if I die' to see her now interested in taking care of herself".

By addressing the gaps in cancer screening for priority neighbourhoods the CASTLE project shows how nurses as NAVIGATORS can work with neighbourhoods to see improvement in health seeking behaviours; increase access to health screening; and contribute to making neighbourhoods a healthy place to live work and play.

For further information: www.castlenow.ca
<https://www.facebook.com/CASTLEknownow/>



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Olive Wahoush & Dyanne Semogas

Nurses are Explorers



Nurses at McMaster University School of Nursing (SON) are EXPLORERS as they search, analyze, and learn about applying research to their practice. Ever mindful of applying new learning strategies, in 2011 the SON took an innovative approach for learning about research applications to launch a unique, experiential, multidisciplinary elective course 'Partnering with Hamilton Neighbourhoods for Health'.

Working together with local residents and with support from faculty the students confront real world issues identified by residents, who act as guides in and experts of their own neighbourhoods. Students then EXPLORE what literature can be applied to the challenges expressed. Throughout the course an ongoing dialogue between students (as EXPLORERS of the evidence) and residents (as interpreters of the evidence in relation to their neighbourhoods) occurs. At the end of the course residents take the most relevant evidence EXPLORED to shape future steps in making their neighbourhoods better.

The Goals of the course include to: 1) engage in learning with the community; 2) apply core principles in strengthening health and social services by working together with and across multiple sectors; 3) work with communities by focusing on their strengths rather than their needs; 4) look at ways to strengthen communities from a systems perspective in which one part of the system impacts other parts; 5) exchange knowledge between learners and community members, wherein students and faculty bring research knowledge which is exchanged with the residents and service providers' knowledge

based on their experience of living and working in the community (Book Smarts-Street Smarts); and 6) evaluate community level interventions for impact on health locally.

Examples of past student projects are :

- ◆ increasing walkability along the Pipeline Trail ('let's do the Pipe!') and engaging local businesses as a Business Improvement Area (BIA) on Kenilworth Ave in Crown Point;
- ◆ building Sustainable Housing and Child Pedestrians and Traffic Safety in Sherman;
- ◆ promoting Physical Activity and Food Security and Engaging community members with mental health concerns in McQuesten.

Research undertaken to evaluate the course examined perceptions of different partners who participated in this initiative and demonstrated the value of EXPLORING our neighbourhoods, together. One resident concluded: "I found the (pipeline) walk very educational ...we would stop and different students had done research on different things and talked about different walks and what had worked in some cities for graffiti for instance".



CROWN POINT COMMUNITY



For further information:

Valaitis RK; Wahoush, O., Murray, N., Isaacs, S., Derbyshire, D., Rolfe, S., and Semogas, D. *Street Smarts ↔ Book Smarts: Three Neighbourhoods and One University School of Nursing Partnering for Health*. Submitted to Sage Open on Oct 31, 2015.



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Nurses are Cultivators



The story of Hamilton, Ontario.... is a story, said Terry Cooke, President and CEO of the Hamilton Community Foundation) which “over the past 40 years has become an economically segregated community, divided by income and geography,” *Tackling Poverty Together* Presentation to the Conference Board of Canada (May 17, 2010 – Ottawa, Ontario). In response, students and faculty from the McMaster School of Nursing (SON) along with community members launched *The Health in the Hubs* initiative. This project linked nursing students and faculty with neighbours from the McQuesten, Crown Point and Sherman resident led Local Planning Teams (LPT). *Phase One: Neighbours and Nurses Working Together* saw the fruition of resident led student teams gathering information about the strengths and challenges experienced by residents. This project marked the beginning of CULTIVATING a long term relationship with the McQuesten LPT. As one student remarked “what I learned through the experience is to recognize the strengths and assets of a community and building on them...I feel that this learning is important to show us what role we can play to change things”.

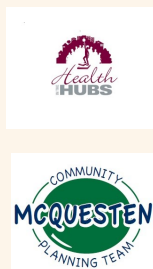
What began as a call for neighbours to attend an LPT community meeting, the SON has helped CULTIVATE the growth of resident led strategies to make a healthy neighbourhood. Students come away with a new appreciation of how being a CULTIVATOR of the ideas of others is a nursing skill ...” I found it very interesting to take on this new role in order to allow the community members to create an event the way that they wanted it and to help support it” a nursing student remarked. From the Community Garden at Oriole Crescent, to the Community Dinners at the St. Helen’s Centre; from the annual Block Party to the Neighbourhood Crawl on Martha Street; from the birth of the McQuesten Newsletter-*The Connection* to the hiring of local residents to be community consultants to student learning, the SON are CULTIVATORS. How so? By laying this ground work to the real-

ization of the McQuesten Neighbourhood’s plan to create an Urban Farm to improve Food Security in the neighbourhood.

As Pat Reid (resident leader at McQuesten) wrote in the May 14, 2015 issue of *The McQuesten Connection*: “The dream of an urban farm in our neighbourhood is where we can have fresh fruit and vegetables all year round. This is slowly becoming a reality. The dream is to create a venue where we can grow and produce food. The vision of the urban farm will include employment, mentoring, training and volunteering opportunities for neighbours. Part of the dream is to have food security for our neighbours where we have a viable food pantry, community kitchen and cooking classes and training”.

As the SON continues to CULTIVATE relationships with neighbours like those in McQuesten we look forward to expanding our horizons with neighbours from other LPT’s while learning to be farmers at the McQuesten Urban Farm.

For further information: <http://nursing.mcmaster.ca/documents/Phase1report.pdf>; <http://mcquestenurbanfarm.wix.com/grow>; <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/4865478-mcquesten-no-grocery-store-no-problem/>; <https://fhs.mcmaster.ca/nursing/documents/TheMcQuestenConnection.pdf>



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