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Baldev Mutta CEO, PCHS

Message from CEO

A Farewell and Reflection: 33 Years of Dedication to Punjabi Community Health Services

After an incredible journey spanning 33 years, the time has come for me to bid farewell to Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS). As the founder and CEO, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve this organization, and I am filled with deep gratitude as I reflect upon the remarkable milestones we have achieved together.

Growth and Transformation: When PCHS was in its infancy, it consisted of just two staff members who shared a common vision of serving our community. Today, I am immensely proud to say that we have grown into a robust institution with a dedicated team of 108 staff members. This growth is a testament to the unwavering commitment and hard work of everyone involved in making PCHS a force to be reckoned with in providing health, settlement, and social services to Peel's equity-deserving communities.

Throughout our journey, we faced numerous challenges, but through perseverance and determination, we overcame them together. We established strong partnerships with community stakeholders, government agencies, and philanthropic organizations, securing resources and funding that

transformed PCHS from an organization operating on a modest budget of \$100,000 per year to one that now receives a remarkable \$10 million in funding. This financial support has allowed us to expand our programs, reach, and impact, becoming recognized as a premier organization in the Central Region of Ontario Health.

Passionate Advocacy and Community Building: At the core of my work at PCHS has been a deep passion for diversity, equity, and inclusion. I firmly believe that healthcare and social services should be accessible to all, regardless of cultural background or language barriers. We have worked tirelessly to provide culturally sensitive care, ensuring that every individual who walks through our doors feels seen, heard, and valued.

The fight against violence directed at women and children has been a deeply personal mission for me. We have developed comprehensive programs and initiatives to prevent violence, support survivors, and raise awareness within our community. By engaging with local schools, community centres, and other organizations, we have fostered a culture of respect, empathy, and gender equality.

Furthermore, supporting emerging small organizations has been a priority for us. We understand the importance of collaboration

**Baldev Mutta CEO, PCHS
Message from CEO**

and nurturing the growth of community initiatives. In line with this vision, we took the initiative to develop the PCHS Media and PCHS Foundation. PCHS Media has allowed us to amplify our message, share important health information, and engage with the community through various media channels. The PCHS Foundation has provided a platform to mobilize resources, raise funds, and support the expansion of our programs and services.

A Legacy of Passionate Leadership and Vision: As I reflect on my time at PCHS, I am humbled by the recognition that I have received as a passionate leader and visionary. However, the true measure of success lies not in individual accolades but in the positive impact we have collectively made on the lives of those we serve. I am immensely proud of the dedicated team of management and staff at PCHS, who have been the driving force behind our achievements. Their unwavering commitment to our mission and their compassionate care have touched countless lives and strengthened our community. I would also be remiss if I did not personally thank the Board of Directors, who stood beside me through thick and thin and helped me lead this organization to greatness.

The legacy we leave behind is not just in the numbers or the programs we have established, but in the lives we have transformed. The stories of resilience, hope, and healing that have emerged from our work are a testament to the power of compassion, collaboration, and community engagement.

Thank You: I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the PCHS board, staff, and volunteers for supporting me in the last 33 years. A heartfelt thank you to the Region of Peel, the City of Mississauga, the City of Brampton, and the Town of Caledon for their unwavering support of PCHS. I would also like to say thank you to United Way Greater Toronto for their support of PCHS. A big thank you to IRCC for funding PCHS's settlement program. Another thank you to the Ministry of Health, Ontario Health, and all the staff at the Central Region of Ontario Health. My sincere thank you to OCASI, AMHO, OCSA, Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, Regional Diversity Roundtable, and Colour of Poverty Change for supporting PCHS. My sincere appreciation and thank you to all the elected officials and politicians who believed in PCHS and supported us so that we could serve equity-deserving communities. Also, my sincere appreciation to my fellow CEOs: Gurpreet Malhotra, Monty Laskin, Noor Din, Srimanta Mohanty, Dr. Kate Bingham, Lyn Petrishuck, Naveed Chaudhry, Jessica Kwik, Ahmed Iqbal, David Smith, Priyanka Sheth, Dev Maharaj, Kim Jenkinson, Effat Ghassemi, Varsha Naik, Karen Parson, Angela Carter, Keddone Dias, Ray Applebaum, Gord Gunning, Heidi Yerxa, Leslie Mudie, Dipti Purbhoo, Kimbelry Floyd, Safia Ahmed, Glen Ricketts, Deborah Gatenby, Paul Gregory, Rashaad Vahed, and Lesley Nagoda. And, a sincere thank you to all the seniors who have supported me in building PCHS. I know that there are many more who have stood beside me and supported me, and I would like to thank all the South Asian media and especially the Punjabi media for being there for PCHS—a very sincere thank you.

**Baldev Mutta CEO, PCHS
Message from CEO**

Conclusion: As I step away from my role as the founder and CEO of PCHS, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude for the opportunity to have been part of this remarkable journey. The growth we have achieved, the lives we have touched, and the lasting impact we have made would not have been possible without the unwavering support and dedication of the PCHS team, our board members, our community partners, and the individuals and families who have entrusted us with their care.

I am confident that PCHS will continue to flourish and evolve under new leadership, guided by a shared commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The seeds we have sown will bear fruit for years to come, providing essential services and support to those in need. I wish Amandeep Kaur, the new CEO of PCHS, great success and hope she takes PCHS to new heights.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of this incredible journey. It is with a mixture of nostalgia, pride, and anticipation that I embark on the next chapter of my life. I will carry the memories and the lessons learned with me, forever grateful for the opportunity to have served PCHS and Peel's equity-deserving communities.

With heartfelt gratitude,
Baldev Mutta

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN THE PUNJABI COMMUNITY

By Baldev Mutta, CEO, PCHS

Violence against women continues unabated in the Punjabi community. As a social worker, I have been involved in the community for the last 33 years, and every year across Canada, Punjabi women are killed at the hands of the men they know.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a complex issue, and it is important to recognize that there is no single issue that can be identified as a leading cause of this type of violence. IPV can occur in various types of relationships and can involve individuals of any gender. However, based on statistical data and research, certain patterns have been observed regarding male-perpetrated violence against women they are involved with. It is essential to note that these reasons are not justifications for violence but rather factors that have been identified in certain cases. The main reasons men kill women they love in IPV situations can include:

1. Power and Control: One of the primary reasons behind IPV is the desire for power and control over the victim. The perpetrator may feel threatened by the victim's independence, assertiveness, or attempts to leave the relationship. They may resort to violence to maintain dominance and control over the victim. Power and control primarily come from misogyny, which means that "certain men have hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women. It is a form of sexism that is used to keep women at a lower social status than men, thus maintaining the social roles of patriarchy. Misogyny has been widely practiced for thousands of years".

2. Jealousy and Possessiveness: Feelings of jealousy, possessiveness, and insecurity can contribute to violent behavior. The perpetrator may believe that their partner is being unfaithful or is interested in



someone else, leading to acts of violence as a response to these perceived threats.

3. Entitlement and Ownership: Some perpetrators view their partners as possessions and believe they have the right to control their lives and make decisions for them. When the victim challenges this perception or attempts to assert autonomy, it can trigger violent reactions.

4. Escalation of Conflict: In some cases, violence can arise as a result of escalating conflicts within the relationship. Factors such as unresolved anger, poor

communication, or an inability to manage conflict effectively can lead to a buildup of tension that culminates in violence.

5. Substance Abuse: The use of drugs or alcohol can exacerbate violent tendencies and impair judgment, leading to an increased likelihood of aggressive behavior. While substance abuse does not excuse violence, it can contribute to its occurrence in certain cases.

6. Learned Behavior: Some individuals who perpetrate violence may have grown up in environments where they witnessed or experienced abuse. They may have learned that violence is an acceptable way to handle conflicts or assert control within relationships. This learned behavior can contribute to a cycle of violence that continues across generations.

7. Societal Norms and Gender Expectations: Societal norms and expectations surrounding gender roles can also play a role in IPV. Traditional gender stereotypes that reinforce male dominance and female submissiveness can create a power imbalance within relationships. When these expectations are challenged or not met, it can lead to a violent response from the perpetrator.

8. Mental Health Issues: In some cases, mental health problems, such as personality disorders, anger management issues, or untreated mental illnesses, can contribute to violent behavior within relationships. These conditions can impair an individual's ability to regulate emotions and make it more difficult for them to resolve conflicts peacefully.

9. Economic Factors: Financial stress, unemployment, or a lack of economic resources can increase tension within a relationship and contribute to the risk of violence. Financial dependence or control

can also be used as a means of exerting power and control over the victim.

10. Social Isolation: Perpetrators may isolate their partners from friends, family, and support networks, making it more challenging for victims to seek help or escape the abusive relationship. This isolation can further entrap the victim and escalate the risk of lethal violence.

11. Previous Threats or Non-Fatal Violence: In some cases, prior incidents of threats or non-fatal violence may have occurred within the relationship before it escalated to lethal violence. These warning signs should be taken seriously, as they indicate an increased risk to the victim's safety.

It's important to emphasize that these factors do not apply universally to all cases of IPV, and each situation is unique. IPV is a complex issue influenced by a range of personal, societal, and cultural factors. Understanding and addressing these underlying dynamics is crucial for the prevention and intervention of IPV. Also, it is crucial to approach the issue of IPV from a multidimensional perspective, taking into account individual, relational, societal, and cultural factors. Prevention efforts should focus on challenging harmful gender norms, promoting healthy relationship dynamics, providing support and resources for victims, and holding perpetrators accountable through legal systems and intervention programs.

My recommendation would be that women seek counselling when they are being abused. This would require being brave and overcoming the stigma that 'I have to disclose my very personal situation to an outsider who is a professional'. But by going to a counsellor, you can understand how dangerous your situation is and what you can do to protect yourself and your children.

SENIORS' MONTH, CELEBRATING OUR SENIORS

By Jagdeep Kainth, Psychogeriatric Resource Consultant (PRC)

In the month of June, as flowers bloom and nature flourishes, it is the perfect time to acknowledge and celebrate the immense contributions of our seniors. Each day, our seniors engage in a multitude of wonderful activities that deserve commendation and applause. Whether it is through their work, creativity, or teaching, they make a significant impact on the lives of others. By volunteering their time and support, seniors play a vital role in their communities, assisting fellow seniors, contributing to local schools, organizing fundraisers, and serving those in need.

That is why June is dedicated to recognizing and honoring the contributions of seniors in improving the lives of individuals, families, and communities. At Punjabi Community Health Services, our Geriatrics Team has devoted this entire month to celebrating seniors. This year's theme, "Working for Seniors", focuses on helping seniors across the province maintain independence, fitness, activity, and good health. We have organized special activities within seniors' groups, inviting both internal and external experts to provide valuable information on topics such as healthy eating, diabetes management, hypertension, exercise, dementia, and social engagement.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), by 2030, one in six people worldwide will be aged 60 or older. By 2050, the number of individuals aged 60 and above will double to 2.1 billion, with the percentage of those aged 80 and above projected to triple by 2050, reaching 426 million. Factors such as advancements in medical care, reduced infant mortality rates, the baby boomer generation, and increased life expectancies have led to this rapid growth of the older adult population.

As we celebrate Seniors Month and recognize the extraordinary contributions of older adults, it is essential to raise awareness about the programs and services

available within our community, tailored to the needs of seniors. These initiatives promote healthy aging and reduce the risk of age-related illnesses. Age should never be a barrier to trying new things, making it the perfect time to start a new exercise program or regularly monitor blood pressure and blood glucose levels. Social engagement is equally vital for cognitive stimulation and emotional well-being.

In recent years, many of us have faced limitations beyond our control. However, it is crucial to prioritize our overall well-being—emotionally, physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Instead of dwelling on restrictions, let us focus on the actions we can take to improve the quality of our lives.

Here are a few suggestions to acknowledge and appreciate the seniors in our lives:

- Write a heartfelt message, send a letter, or make a phone call to check in on a senior.
- Spend quality time with them, enjoying a cup of coffee or tea and engaging in meaningful conversations.
- Volunteer at a retirement or long-term care home, offering companionship and support to seniors.
- Take the time to listen attentively to their stories and seek their wisdom and advice.
- Express gratitude to all the seniors in our lives for their love, support, and guidance, which have shaped us into who we are today.

We extend warm wishes for a happy Seniors Month and express our deepest gratitude to all the seniors who have showered us with love and contributed to our personal growth.



WITHDRAWAL MANAGEMENT

By Sandeep Sekhon, Case Manager-CWMS

Withdrawal management is known as detoxification or detox, it is the process of removing alcohol or drugs from the body and managing the symptoms of withdrawal that can occur. In the South Asian community, there may be cultural and language barriers that can make accessing and navigating withdrawal management services more difficult. The biggest barrier is stigma, it refers to negative attitudes, stereotypes, and discriminatory behaviors towards individuals who engage in substance use or struggle with addiction. This stigma can create barriers to seeking help, deter access to treatment, and continue a cycle of shame and isolation.

To address these challenges, it is important for withdrawal management programs to be culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of South Asian clients. This can include offering services in South Asian languages, providing culturally relevant education and resources.

Community outreach and engagement can also play an important role in increasing awareness of withdrawal management services and reducing stigma around substance use and addiction in the South Asian community. This can involve working with community leaders, religious organizations, and other cultural institutions to raise awareness and promote access to services.

It is also important to recognize that withdrawal management is just one part of a comprehensive approach to addiction treatment. To promote long-term recovery, South Asian clients may benefit from holistic and culturally responsive treatment that addresses not only their physical symptoms of addiction but also their emotional, spiritual, and social needs. This can involve a range of evidence-based treatments, including

cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness-based interventions, and family support.

PCHS is offering IN-HOUSE AND MOBILE COMMUNITY WITHDRAWAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES for individuals experiencing alcohol/other substances related withdrawal and craving symptoms and need help. Program Provides a supportive environment to clients with voluntary alcohol or other drug withdrawals, helps dispel myths, challenge stereotypes, and foster empathy and understanding, providing support, reassurance, coping methods, motivational counseling, and appropriate referrals are some program components. Program also provide culturally sensitive treatment and support services that address the unique needs and concerns of the South Asian community. This includes providing language access, culturally competent counselors, and incorporating cultural values and beliefs into treatment approaches.

For more information about these services please contact PCHS at (905) 677-0889

BREAKING BARRIERS, EMBRACING ACTION: ACTION ANXIETY DAY

By Sahejpreet K Chahal, Community Health Ambassador, CHA



In today's fast-paced world, many people feel anxious about taking action. Fear of failure or the unknown prevents them from realizing their potential in starting new projects, making important decisions, or stepping outside their comfort zones. June 10, 2023, marks the celebration of the 3rd annual Action Anxiety Day. It encourages awareness, advocacy, and support for anxiety disorders through sharing personal stories, wearing blue and orange attire to eliminate stigma, and fundraising for affordable and evidence-based treatments for all age groups.

It motivates individuals to confront their fears, embrace change, and take proactive steps for personal growth. By recognizing the power of action and overcoming anxiety, this day inspires people to seize life-changing opportunities and venture beyond their comfort zones.

Taking Action on Action Anxiety Day:

- 1. Recognise and Accept Your Fears:** Take some time to consider the hidden fears that are preventing you from moving forward. The first step in overcoming anxiety is knowing where it comes from
- 2. Start Small:** Divide your objectives into manageable steps. By doing this, you can gain confidence and momentum as you complete each stage

3. Seek Support: Surround yourself with a network of mentors, friends, and family who can provide you advice and motivation. Sharing your worries with others might occasionally lighten the load and offer new insights

4. Exercise Self-Compassion. Treat yourself nicely at all times. Recognise that conquering anxiety requires effort and patience. Treating oneself with patience and kindness will help you achieve your goals

5. Adopt a Growth Mindset: Embrace that failure is a necessary step on the road to success. Instead of seeing failures as indicators of your deficiencies, see them as chances for learning and development

Action is the antidote to fear, and **Action Anxiety Day** is a powerful reminder of this. We open up fresh possibilities for both personal and professional development by facing our fears, accepting change, and acting decisively. Always remember that taking action and making even tiny progress counts. So, let's take charge of our lives on this Action Anxiety Day, step beyond of our comfort zones, and pave the path for a future full with success, resiliency, and self-fulfillment.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

By Deepinder Singh, RPN Case Manager (Mental Health)

National Indigenous History Month provides an opportunity for Canadians to learn, celebrate, and honor the rich heritage, diverse cultures, and important contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. As an organization committed to promoting inclusivity and cultural diversity, Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) recognizes the significance of National Indigenous History Month and its role in fostering understanding, respect, and reconciliation.

PCHS believes that cultural exchange and dialogue play a vital role in promoting understanding and building bridges between communities. During Indigenous History Month, PCHS encourages the community to actively engage in learning about the rich Indigenous cultures, traditions, and histories that have shaped Canada. By participating in cultural events, workshops, and educational programs organized by Indigenous communities, we can expand our knowledge, challenge stereotypes, and foster meaningful connections.

Reconciliation is an ongoing journey that requires active participation and commitment from all Canadians. PCHS recognizes the significance of acknowledging the historical injustices and systemic issues that continue to impact Indigenous communities. Through collaborative partnerships and community engagement, PCHS seeks to contribute to the reconciliation process by amplifying Indigenous voices and advocating for equity.

National Indigenous History Month provides an opportunity for the entire community and organizations like Punjabi Community Health Services to reflect on shared histories, foster cultural understanding, and contribute to reconciliation efforts. By actively participating in events, engaging in dialogue, and promoting health equity, we strive to build stronger connections and celebrate the diversity that enriches Canada. As we celebrate Indigenous History Month, let us work together to create a more inclusive and equitable society where all cultures are respected, valued, and celebrated.



BIKE THE CREEK

By Harkiranpreet Sidhu, RN, Health Promotion Officer - HPCS

On June 10th, the 9th annual Bike the Creek event took place at Jim Archdekin Park, uniting the communities of Brampton, Caledon, and Mississauga in Ontario. This remarkable event, attended by 1,500 individuals and supported by 50 dedicated volunteers, aimed to raise awareness about the numerous benefits of cycling and the importance of active transportation for creating healthy and sustainable communities.

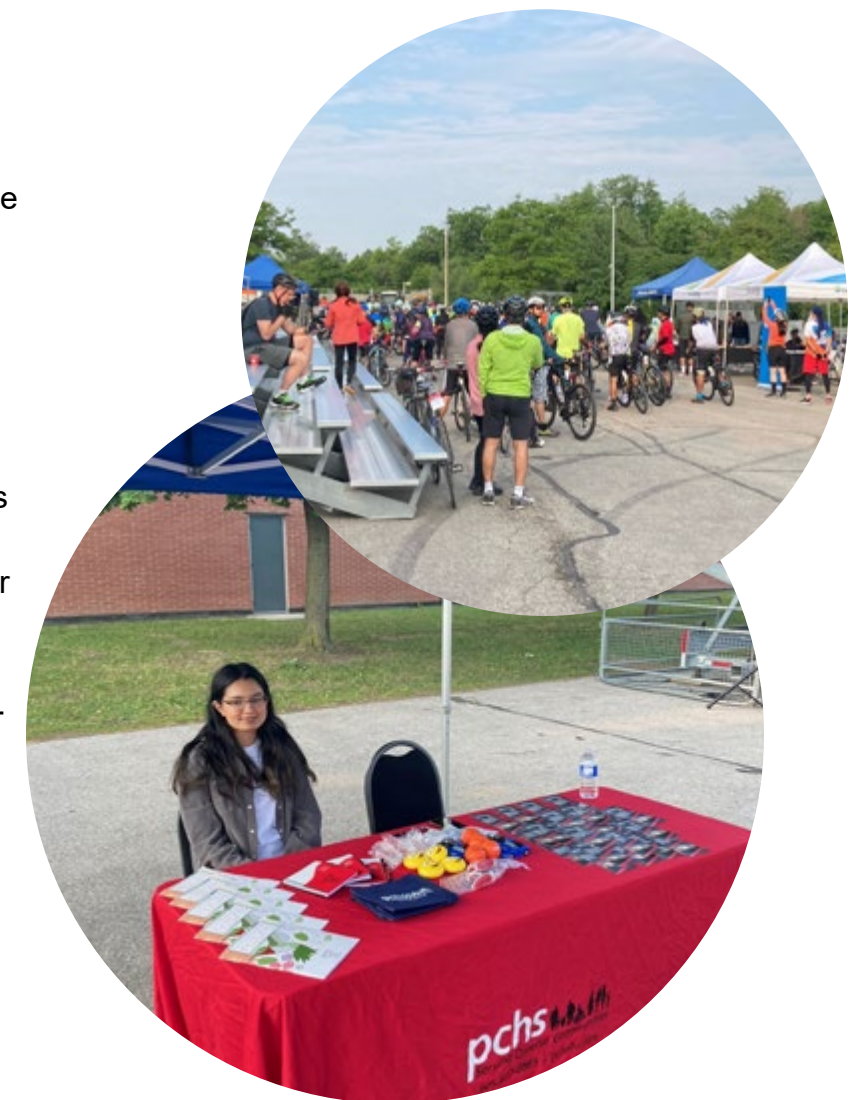
Under the theme of “Resilient Communities,” Bike the Creek emphasized the collective strength that arises when individuals choose cycling as their mode of transportation, promoting a more sustainable and environmentally friendly lifestyle. Participants were encouraged to appreciate the beauty of the natural surroundings by riding the scenic nature paths of the Peel region.

The event received generous sponsorship from various organizations committed to supporting the cause. PCHS, along with the City of Brampton, Bike Brampton, the Government of Canada, Decathlon Canada, and The Biking Lawyer, among others, were proud sponsors of this incredible gathering.

In addition to engaging with community members and discussing their services, the HPCS team educated attendees about the importance of their health and well-being. Moreover, the event provided a fantastic opportunity for networking and fostering connections among like-minded individuals passionate about cycling and sustainable living.

To show appreciation for the sponsors and participants, a delicious free lunch was provided, courtesy of the Region of Peel and Gourmet BBQ.

Bike the Creek 2023 was an unforgettable experience that not only encouraged physical activity but also underscored the significance of resilient communities. By choosing cycling as a means of transportation, participants collectively embraced a healthier lifestyle while immersing themselves in the wonders of the great outdoors. The event served as a powerful reminder of the transformative power of cycling in building sustainable communities.



PRIDE MONTH, HISTORY OF PRIDE

Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) fosters an inclusive environment that supports the LGBTQ2S+ community. History of Pride within Canada spans over decades.

To begin, on May 14, 1969 Canada decriminalized homosexual acts between consenting adults with the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act first introduced in December 1968. It receives royal assent on June 27. One day before the Stonewall Riots took place in New York.

Pride week 1973 – was a national LGBT rights event held in August 1973 in several Canadian cities, including Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Saskatoon and Winnipeg.

December 15, 1973 – Homosexuality removed as a “disorder” from Diagnostics and Statistics Manual of Mental Disorders.

December 16, 1977 – Quebec adds Sexual Orientation to the Human Rights Code, making it the first province in Canada to pass a gay civil rights law. The law made it illegal to discriminate against gay people in housing, public accommodation and employment. By 2001, all provinces and territories adopted this law except Alberta, Prince Edward Island and Northwest Territories.

January 1, 1991 – City of Toronto officially endorses the Lesbian and Gay Pride Day in Toronto.

Passing Bill C-23: Including same-sex couples In February, the Liberal party introduced Bill C-23, the Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, in response to the Supreme Court’s May 1999 ruling. The act would give same-sex couples who have lived together for more than a

year the same benefits and obligations as common-law couples.

On April 11, 2000, Parliament passes Bill C-23, with a vote of 174 to 72. The legislation gives same-sex couples the same social and tax benefits as heterosexuals in common-law relationships.

June 10, 2003 – Same-sex Couple Marry in Ontario.

Michael Leshner and Michael Stark became the first same-sex couple to be issued a marriage license and marry in Toronto, Ontario after the ruling by the Ontario Court of Appeals. The unanimous Court found that the exclusion of same-sex couples was a clear violation of the Charter of Rights & Freedoms, the court ruling allowing same-sex couples to marry would take effect immediately.

July 20, 2005 – Bill C-38: Civil Marriage Act Bill C-38 bill became federal law which gave same-sex couples the legal right to marry. This made Canada the fourth country in the world to allow same-sex marriage.

June 27, 2009 – Toronto’s First Trans March

June 1, 2016 – Parliament Raises Pride Flag for the first time in Canadian history, a pride flag is raised on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

These are some of the highlights, you can read the full history on <https://www.queerevents.ca/canada/pride/history>



DBNC SUMMER FEST

By Harkiranpreet Sidhu, RN, Health Promotion Officer - HPCS

On June 3rd, 2023, Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) enthusiastically participated in DBNC’s Summer Fest, a vibrant event held at Mississauga Valley Park. DBNC’s annual festival, which serves as a celebration of our community’s diverse traditions, music, culinary delights, and artistic expressions, drew a remarkable gathering of around 500 participants. PCHS showcased its commitment to community engagement by deploying teams from various departments, including Settlement, Geriatrics, Mental Health, and HPCS.

PCHS’s teams eagerly engaged with community members, passionately sharing information about their services. The event provided an excellent opportunity for PCHS to connect with individuals, fostering meaningful dialogue on a range of topics. Through informative conversations and interactive activities, PCHS effectively communicated the benefits and significance of their programs to the local community.

The presence of other agencies, such as Indus, further enhanced the networking opportunities for PCHS. This collaborative environment facilitated the exchange of knowledge and resources among organizations, strengthening the collective effort to support and uplift the community. PCHS representatives enthusiastically interacted with their counterparts from various agencies, actively forging meaningful connections.

The Summer Fest was truly a memorable event for PCHS and the community at large. Not only did it provide a platform for PCHS to showcase its services and expertise, but it also enabled individuals to discover the wealth of resources available to them. By participating in DBNC’s Summer Fest, PCHS demonstrated its unwavering commitment to community outreach and engagement. PCHS eagerly anticipates their ongoing involvement in similar events in the near future!

PCHS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

By Harjoban Arraich, Mental Health Case Manager (In-STED)

In December 2022, Punjabi Community Health Services connected with Castlebrooke Secondary School in Brampton, Ontario, to discuss creating an in-school program centred around youth mentorship and engagement to empower youth and equip them with leadership skills. Mental Health Case Manager Harjoban Arraich and Peer Support worker Sukhpreet Tiwana spearheaded the project in collaboration with Castlebrooke High School Basketball Coach Mr. Dhillon. Together they implemented the Peer Group project, in which the team looked into issues such as the growing number of violence among students, concerns at home, social issues and academic stressors. The program's goal was to have students from grades 11 and 12 become mentors for students in grades 9 and 10, allowing the senior group of students to share their experiences and journey throughout high school with the junior students. The senior group of boys learned mentorship and leadership skills through various lessons and workshops facilitated by PCHS staff.

Over the course of the school year, the senior group developed an understanding of how to act as mentors and relate to those who may be following in the same footsteps as themselves. Through the various workshops and open table discussions, the students had the opportunity to address and raise questions about different subject matters that were relevant and current to their experience through high school. The topic of in-school violence was prevalent in many of the conversations as this was something that had affected the students. With their desire to address the issues and exercise their ability to bring upon change, the student cohort had an idea to create an in-school soccer tournament. The students surveyed

and noticed that sports are a great way to build upon skills like teamwork, leadership and effective communication while also attempting to divert their peers away from violence in their school.

In May 2023, the group, now dubbed "THE CASTLE-BOOKE SOORME," launched a seven-a-side soccer tournament during school lunch hours designed and facilitated by the group members. Group members dedicated their lunch to operating the matches and took on various roles to ensure smooth operation. Ultimately, the members displayed a desire and passion to make positive changes and challenged themselves to build on their skills while empowering each other.

If you are interested to volunteer with PCHS please contact peersupport@pchs4u.com



CATARACT AWARENESS MONTH

By Harkiranpreet Sidhu, RN, Health Promotion Officer - HPCS

Cataract Awareness Month in June is significant as it raises awareness about a global issue. According to the World Health Organization, cataracts are the leading cause of blindness worldwide. In Canada alone, around 2.5 million people suffer from cataracts, a condition that poses a threat to their vision. The good news is that cataracts can be effectively treated. In fact, some individuals experience improved vision after cataract surgery compared to before the development of the condition.

A cataract is when the lens in your eye becomes cloudy, making your vision blurry or hazy. It happens because proteins in the lens stick together, blocking light and making it hard to see clearly. Cataracts tend to develop slowly and can impact either one or both eyes.

Cataracts can manifest through various symptoms, including:

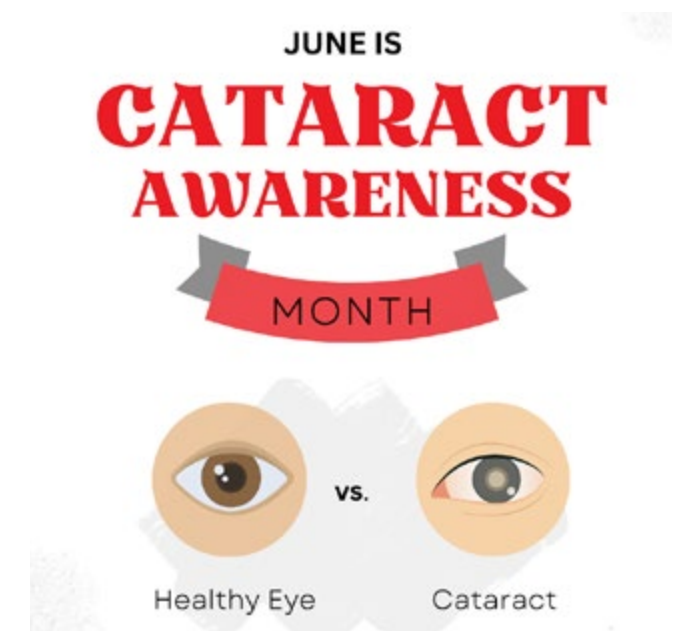
- Blurred Vision: Objects may appear fuzzy or unclear, making it challenging to see details
- Difficulty with Night Vision: Reduced ability to see clearly in low-light conditions, such as when driving at night
- Light Sensitivity: Increased sensitivity to bright lights, which may cause discomfort or glare
- Double Vision: Seeing multiple images or experiencing overlapping vision in one or both eyes
- Fading of Colors: Colors may appear less vibrant or have a yellowish tinge
- Requiring Bright Light for Reading: Difficulty reading or performing close-up tasks unless there is ample lighting

It is important to note that experiencing one or more of these symptoms does not definitively indicate the presence of cataracts. A comprehensive eye examination by an eye care professional

is necessary for an accurate diagnosis.

Moreover, there are several common myths and facts surrounding cataracts that are important to clarify. One prevalent myth is that cataracts can be cured with medication or eye drops. However, the reality is that no medications or eye drops can eliminate cataracts. The sole effective treatment for cataracts is through cataract surgery, during which the cloudy lens is surgically removed and replaced with an artificial lens, known as an intraocular lens. Contrary to the myth that cataracts only affect older adults, they can develop in people of all ages due to various factors. Regular eye exams and proactive care are vital for early detection and treatment at any stage of life, ensuring optimal vision health.

During Cataract Awareness Month, let's educate and empower others to take control of their eye health through knowledge, regular exams, and timely treatment. Together, we can shed light on cataracts and inspire a focus on ocular well-being.



CANADIAN MEN'S HEALTH MONTH

By Savita Saini, Program Support, HPCS



As part of the PCHS High Priority Communities Strategy (HPCS) project, we proudly support Canadian Men's Health Month—a significant initiative that focuses on raising awareness and promoting well-being among men in our communities. This article aims to highlight the importance of Canadian Men's Health Month and its positive impact on men's well-being.

Canadian Men's Health Month takes place in June and provides a valuable platform to address various health challenges faced by men. It encourages conversations about physical and mental health, empowering men to make informed decisions and adopt healthier lifestyles. This campaign aims to increase awareness about mental health and chronic illnesses, inspiring men to take proactive steps towards better health.

Mental well-being is a crucial aspect of Canadian Men's Health Month, particularly in communities where mental health support may be limited. The campaign strives to reduce stigma, promote open conversations, and advocate for accessible mental

health resources. Men are provided with valuable information on coping mechanisms, stress management, and seeking help, encouraging them to prioritize their mental well-being.

This issue is not exclusive to Canadian society but extends globally, where men's mental health often lacks the attention, it truly deserves for a well-functioning society. There exists a perception that men are inherently physically and mentally strong, which perpetuates stereotypes and hinders men from seeking the necessary help. Consequently, this reluctance creates avoidable barriers to their overall well-being.

Stress management is also a key focus of Canadian Men's Health Month. The campaign focuses on resilience, self-care, and positive coping strategies. Men are equipped with resources to navigate challenges and maintain their emotional well-being.

In summary, Canadian Men's Health Month serves as an important platform for addressing men's health issues and promoting overall well-being. By addressing mental health, advocating for healthy choices, emphasizing prevention, and fostering social connections, the campaign empowers men to take control of their health. Let's celebrate Canadian Men's Health Month by encouraging men to prioritize their well-being, seek support when needed, and make informed choices for healthier and happier lives.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELLNESS FORUM

By Kanwalpreet Kaur, Program Coordinator, Building Capacity Program

A professional development and wellness forum was recently organized by the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG) and funded by IRCC on June 14th and 15th, 2023. PCHS actively contributed to this forum throughout the coordinating and facilitating process. Manager, Settlement Services, and Building Capacity Coordinator were a part of the planning committee from the developmental stage and contributed to the committee by participating in event discussions and assigning duties. PCHS also sent volunteers for various duties for the smooth delivery of the workshops during the forum. The forum was attended by frontline settlement staff across Peel and Halton Regions. IRCC representatives were also in attendance for both the days.

The decision to have this forum arose from a need pertaining to the wellness and mental health of the frontline settlement staff who are often affected by burnout and compassion fatigue. This forum focused on various case scenarios that were carefully created by the planning committee to focus discussions on client-counsellor relationship, boundaries, burnout, fatigue and self-care. The case scenarios brought attention to the overwhelming responsibilities of a counsellor and their daily struggles with case load. After the group discussion on case scenarios, the best practices and strategies regarding how to cope with stress and overcome compassion fatigue were discussed. This discussion was followed by wellness and mindfulness activities (practicing mindfulness, chair yoga and painting) in order to relieve stress and generate awareness

around issues that the frontline staff experiences. The guest speaker, Soo Min Tho, Professor of Organizational Behaviour & HR Management, University of Toronto Mississauga, connected the outcomes from the case scenarios and stressed upon the importance of indulging in self-love, alongside establishing well-defined boundaries between oneself and the client.

Through this capacity building forum, PCHS Settlement staff had the opportunity to actively participate in the wellness activities mentioned above and bring back the best practices from the forum to be shared with the other staff members. The staff gained immensely in terms of networking with other settlement counsellors and sharing their own stories. The staff is positive that this rejuvenation opportunity they recently availed will help them to look at case scenarios and case management in a better light while paying attention to their own well-being.



SOUTH ASIAN HEALTH ALLIANCE (SAHA) GRAND LAUNCH

By Gursharan Kaur Executive Assistant to the CEO and Board Liaison

On Friday, May 26, 2023, the PCHS team attended the South Asian Health Alliance's grand launch. The goal of SAHA is to expand South Asians' access to and availability of health services in Ontario.

The CEO of PCHS, Baldev Mutta, was invited to speak as the gala's keynote speaker. In his speech, Mr. Mutta discussed the reasons why working together is now more crucial than ever to confront new and persistent problems across diversified communities.

Baldev Mutta received the Lifetime Achievement Award from SAHA CEO Neethan Shan, and PCHS received the Award of Appreciation. PCHS wishes the South Asian Health Alliance its best wishes for success.



VOLUNTEER MBC V-OSCAR AWARD

By Sukhpreet Tiwana, Peer Support Program Coordinator

Volunteer MBC hosted their V-Oscar award ceremony on June 21st 2023. The V-Oscars recognizes the excellence of outstanding volunteers from the past year who belong to various different organizations within the peel region. Divya Banga (pictured in the purple dress) was nominated for the newcomer Gem award amongst several other volunteers. Divya received this award for her on-going commitment and dedication to the community through PCHS. Divya is very passionate about helping the community, and has dedicated her time to hosting mental health events, assisting seniors, and providing peer support to clients. Her commitment to helping others is an inspiration to all of us at PCHS. A special thanks to Divya for all her hard work and devotion to PCHS!



HEART LAKE RUN EVENT

By Sahejpreet K Chahal, Community Health Ambassador, CHA

On June 24th and June 25th, 2023, Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) team participated in the Heart Lake Run, an exciting event held at the CAA Centre in Brampton. This two-day event, which included an Active Living & Climate Action Festival, as well as a 5K Run/Walk and 1K Kids Dash, aimed to promote healthy lifestyles and raise awareness about crucial sustainable development goals. Funded by the Government of Canada and the City of Brampton, the Heart Lake Run focused on areas aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including Zero Hunger, Good Health & Wellbeing, Climate Action, Life below Water, and Life on Land.

Throughout the event, participants had the opportunity to attend various plenary sessions that delved into these key areas. One of the highlights was a presentation by Sahejpreet Chahal, CHA from the HPCS team, who shared valuable insights on “Diabetes: A Chronic Disease.” Sahejpreet covered essential topics such as diabetes statistics in the Region of Peel, different types of diabetes, and effective strategies for managing the condition through diet and exercise.

The 2023 Heart Lake Run 5K was sanctioned by Athletics Ontario, with the route measured and certified by Athletics Canada and World Athletics. Additionally, this year’s event featured a unique initiative known as “5K Plogging,” which encouraged participants to pick up trash while jogging or running. By incorporating this environmental aspect into the run, the Heart Lake Run aimed to promote sustainability and inspire individuals to make a positive impact on the community. Two dedicated members from the PCHS Geriatrics team, Madalsa Mittal and Simrandeep Kang, participated in the Heart Lake Run as enthusiastic runners. Their involvement represented the organization’s commitment

to promoting active living and taking part in community events that align with this mission.

The Heart Lake Run attracted a diverse range of community members and partners, fostering an atmosphere of engagement and collaboration. With over 35 exhibitors present, including PCHS, participants had the opportunity to connect with organizations such as the Canadian Armed Forces, Kenyan Canadian Association, Region of Peel, WellFort, and many others. This interaction provided a platform for sharing information, resources, and initiatives that can benefit the community members.

The Heart Lake Run, attended by the PCHS team, proved to be a successful and impactful event that brought together individuals, organizations, and communities in support of active living and climate action. This event showcased the power of collective efforts in striving for a healthier, more sustainable future. The interactions with community members and partner organizations further reinforced the importance of collaboration and community engagement in achieving these goals.



PCHS Health Magazine

Teen Book Review

The Catcher in The Rye

Author: J.D Sallinger

Reviewed by: Zahrah Khurram
Brampton Library Youth Volunteer

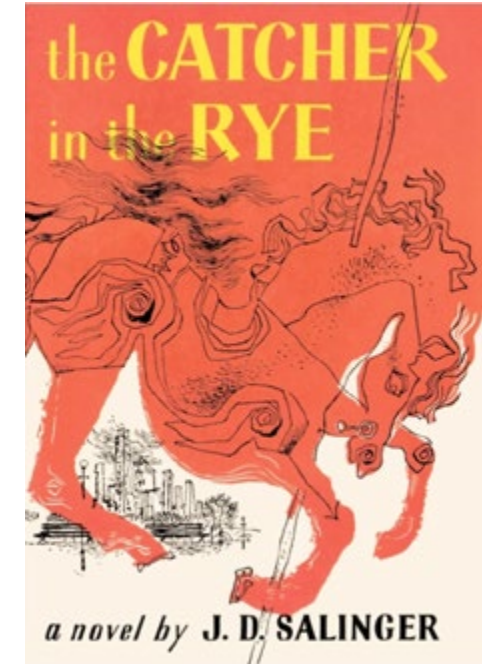
Pages:176 pages

Firstly, this book is considered a classic and is referenced in many aspects of pop culture. This prompted me to read the actual book to see if the amouration towards it held true. I was more than enthralled to see it was available in the Brampton Library! The most interesting part about this book for me was the writing style. It emulates the way a teenager would think to themselves, in the sense that it is choppy, barely verbose and has an edge of angst to it. Although this book was written in the 50’s it has the eternal essence of the infamous ‘teenage identity crisis’ that even I can pledge by.

Ultimately, it’s a read through the series of events the main character Holden Caulfield goes through. Following the expulsion of him from his prestigious high school, many conflicts and interesting interactions occur. As he goes through life, exploring the world on his own for the first time, he struggles with internal issues he is going through. It’s a fascinating commentary on how appealing the quick and easy pleasures of life are when you’re down in the dumps. It’s hard to get the effort to bring yourself back up when

your train of thought is as negative as Caulfield’s but even so, there are things he holds quite dear to his heart– literally. One of those items being his deceased brother’s baseball glove, he brings with him on his travels. It’s evident that although he claims he is over his brother’s death, his melancholic view on life ever since the tragedy is evident. It’s a contemporary look at depression through the eyes of a young person. It displays how boys deal with their feelings in a society which urges them to repress them and be endlessly strong.

The key strengths of the writing in this book was that it featured a poetic style with realistic pacing. It sheds life on the tone and mentality of Holden Caulfield as he tries to keep up with the other aspects of his life before giving up completely. Having freedom to do whatever you want at such a young age may lead to some bad decisions, however, Holden does just that while feeling like something is still lacking. He tries to drown himself in the so-called pleasures of life: alcoholism, clubbing, smoking excessively, hooking up. In the end the pain and the grief keeps



him afloat, unable to forget about his troubles no matter how many cigarette buds he throws out the window. It’s a telltale sign of his downfall and whether he gets out of this bad place or not is the ending you should pick this book up for.

To sum up, the well-referenced book The Catcher in the Rye is a wonderful read for anyone looking for a melancholic teen fiction to really strike a chord with them. It’s a timeless piece of work that is enjoyable even today, despite its date of publication. It simulates the mentality of a distressed young boy, growing up in a time after the war, trying to keep up with life and its progression against the odds. He searches for and discovers ways (though not often good ones) to try to cope with the turmoil he feels within.

The book is also available at Brampton Library
[Click here to see](#)



SUMMER NEWCOMER YOUTH EVENTS



**MUST BE PERMANENT
RESIDENT OR
CONVENTION REFUGEE
AGES 13 - 19**

Week 1:
JULY 10-14

&

Week 2:
AUG 8-11

Free!
Materials Provided.

Activities

- ✓ Photovoice Project 12pm - 3pm
- ✓ Day Trip to the ROM 11am - 4pm
- ✓ Financial Literacy 12pm - 3 pm
- ✓ Learn to Fish 10am - 3:30pm

50 Sunny Meadow Blvd

Brampton, ON
L6R 0Y7

Registration Link

<https://SC23week1.eventbrite.ca>
<https://SC23week2.eventbrite.ca>

More Information: (905) 872 - 3517 tashona@pchs4u.com



PEEL PRIDE Save the Date

PEEL PRIDE EVENT
#Resistance&Persistence

July 22nd, 2023
12:00 - 4:00 PM

Burnhamthorpe Library
3650 Dixie Road,
Mississauga, ON, L4Y 3V9



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Join parenting sessions with Baldev Mutta every first Thursday of each month
[Click here](#)



PCHS Health Magazine

Punjabi Community Health Services

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