

PCHS

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# HEALTH MAGAZINE

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# LETTER FROM THE CEO

Amandeep Kaur CEO, PCHS

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## Lighting the Path of Awareness, Celebration, and Connection

October has been a month of awareness, celebration, and connection at Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS). From raising awareness about breast cancer to celebrating Diwali and engaging in creative Halloween activities, the month reflected the spirit of compassion, inclusivity, and community well-being that defines who we are at PCHS.

Our Breast Cancer Awareness Drop-In Event, held on October 15 at 60 West Drive, Brampton, brought together staff, clients, and community partners to promote education and early detection. Through interactive trivia, risk assessments, and open discussions, participants gained a better understanding of the importance of regular screening and early intervention. The event fostered a sense of empowerment and solidarity, reminding us that awareness saves lives and that every conversation matters. I extend my gratitude to the SHPP Team for their thoughtful planning and dedication to community education and prevention.

This month, we also celebrated Diwali, the Festival of Lights, with our seniors and community members. The PCHS Seniors Diwali Celebration, held on October 22 at the Verdi Convention Centre, was a joyful gathering filled with laughter, music, and delicious food. It was more than a celebration; it was a moment to honour our traditions, strengthen community bonds, and spread light, hope, and gratitude.

Adding to the festive spirit, our Settlement Youth Team hosted “PCHS Haunted Hangout” at the Malton Youth Hub on October 25. This enjoyable and inclusive Halloween event created a safe space for newcomer youth to connect, express their creativity, and form friendships. Events like these serve as reminders that inclusion and belonging are essential to the well-being and growth of young people.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate how PCHS continues to integrate health awareness, cultural celebration, and community involvement into everything we do.

As we enter November, a month of reflection and gratitude, I would like to thank our staff, volunteers, and community partners for their ongoing dedication to service, kindness, and connection. Your joint efforts create a healthier, stronger, and more compassionate community.

**Stay tuned and join us on November 29 at the Friends of PCHS event!**



# Breast Cancer Awareness Month: Early Detection Saves Lives

By: Savita Saini, Preventive Care Specialist



Every October, the world unites in pink to mark Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM) — a time dedicated to raising awareness, promoting screening, and supporting those affected by breast cancer. Established in 1985 through a partnership between the American Cancer Society and Imperial Chemical Industries (now AstraZeneca), BCAM has grown into a global movement recognized by the iconic pink ribbon, a symbol of hope and solidarity popularized by the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

Breast cancer remains the most common cancer among women worldwide and one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths. However, thanks to early detection and improved treatments, survival rates have significantly increased over the years. Awareness campaigns like BCAM play a vital role in encouraging women to understand their risk, recognize early signs, and undergo regular screening.





Regular mammograms are the most effective way to detect breast cancer early, often before symptoms appear. Early detection not only increases the chances of successful treatment but also reduces the need for aggressive procedures. Health experts recommend that women aged 50 to 74 get a mammogram every two years, while those at higher risk — due to family history or genetic factors — should discuss personalized screening plans with their healthcare provider.

Beyond medical care, BCAM aims to break the silence surrounding breast cancer. Fear, stigma, and cultural barriers can prevent many women, especially in racialized and underserved communities, from seeking timely help. Open conversations and education empower individuals to take charge of their health and support others in doing the same.

Community initiatives, awareness walks, and educational workshops throughout October help normalize these conversations and highlight that no one should face cancer alone.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is also a time to celebrate survivors and remember those who have lost their battle. Support groups, counseling, and community programs provide emotional healing and connection for patients and families navigating this journey.

Wearing pink is a symbol — but taking action is the message. Schedule your mammogram, encourage a loved one to do the same, and spread awareness within your community. Together, through awareness, compassion, and early detection, we can continue to save lives.

Additionally, the community offers a range of resources designed to provide education, support, and guidance for individuals seeking assistance. Please refer to the link below for a list of these services and additional information on how to access them.



# The Courage to Reflect: Recognizing Our Own Biases

**By: Akanksha Sharma, Addictions Case Manager**



In the ongoing journey toward building inclusive, equitable, and anti-oppressive spaces, one of the most essential — and yet most challenging — steps is developing the courage to reflect on our own biases. Biases are not merely personal flaws; they are often unconscious frameworks shaped by the world we live in and the experiences that have shaped us. Recognizing them requires humility, curiosity, and a commitment to growth.

We all have a worldview — a framework through which we see and interpret the world. This worldview is not created in isolation; it is deeply influenced by the nurturing part of our lives. The kind of family setting we were raised in, the values we were taught, the culture we grew up in, and the diversity (or lack thereof) in our friendships and communities all shape how we see others. Our exposure to different races, ethnicities, religions, genders, and worldviews while growing up silently contributes to our understanding of what feels “normal” or “comfortable.”

Sometimes, these worldviews unconsciously guide our actions, judgments, and decisions. For instance, we might assume a newcomer colleague's accent means they have less expertise, or we might feel more comfortable collaborating with those who share similar communication styles or cultural references. These subtle patterns — though often unintentional — can lead to microaggressions, exclusion, and inequitable outcomes in workplaces and communities.

In their book *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People* (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013), the authors remind us that bias operates beneath the surface of our awareness. Even well-intentioned individuals can make biased decisions without realizing it. This insight is critical in the Canadian workplace, where equity, diversity, and inclusion are often discussed, but less often practiced through deep personal reflection

Reflection requires courage because it often reveals uncomfortable truths. It's not easy to confront moments when our decisions, even subtly, may have been influenced by bias. Yet, acknowledging this is not a sign of weakness — it's a mark of growth. When we engage in self-reflection, we begin to see beyond our assumptions, allowing empathy and fairness to guide our choices.

Few questions that we can ask ourselves to reflect on our own biases,

- “What experiences shaped my understanding of people who are different from me?”
- “When have I made assumptions about someone based on their appearance or background?”
- “Whose voices do I listen to — and whose do I unintentionally overlook?”

**These small but consistent acts of self-awareness are the foundation of anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice.**



# Understanding Your Liver: Protecting the Body's Silent Worker

**By: Daljit Basra, Case Manager - Addiction**  
**Nirlep Gill, Peer Support - Addiction**



The **liver** is one of the most important organs in the human body. Often called the body's “**chemical factory**,” it performs more than **500 vital functions**—including detoxifying harmful substances, producing bile to aid in fat digestion, regulating blood sugar levels, and storing essential vitamins and minerals.

Despite its importance, **liver health is often overlooked** until serious damage occurs. In this article, we will discuss three common liver diseases—**Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (AFLD)**, **Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD)**, and **Liver Cirrhosis**—along with their causes, symptoms, and treatment options.

## 1. Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (AFLD)

### Cause

Alcohol is one of the leading causes of liver damage. When alcohol is consumed in excess, the liver struggles to break it down efficiently, leading to **fat accumulation inside liver cells**. Over time, this can progress from fatty liver to **inflammation (hepatitis)**, **fibrosis**, and eventually **cirrhosis**.





## Symptoms

- Often no symptoms in the early stages
- Fatigue and weakness
- Loss of appetite and unintentional weight loss
- Pain or discomfort in the upper right abdomen

## Treatment

- Complete abstinence from alcohol is the most effective treatment.
- Follow a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Engage in regular exercise to maintain a healthy weight.
- In advanced cases, medications or liver transplant may be necessary.

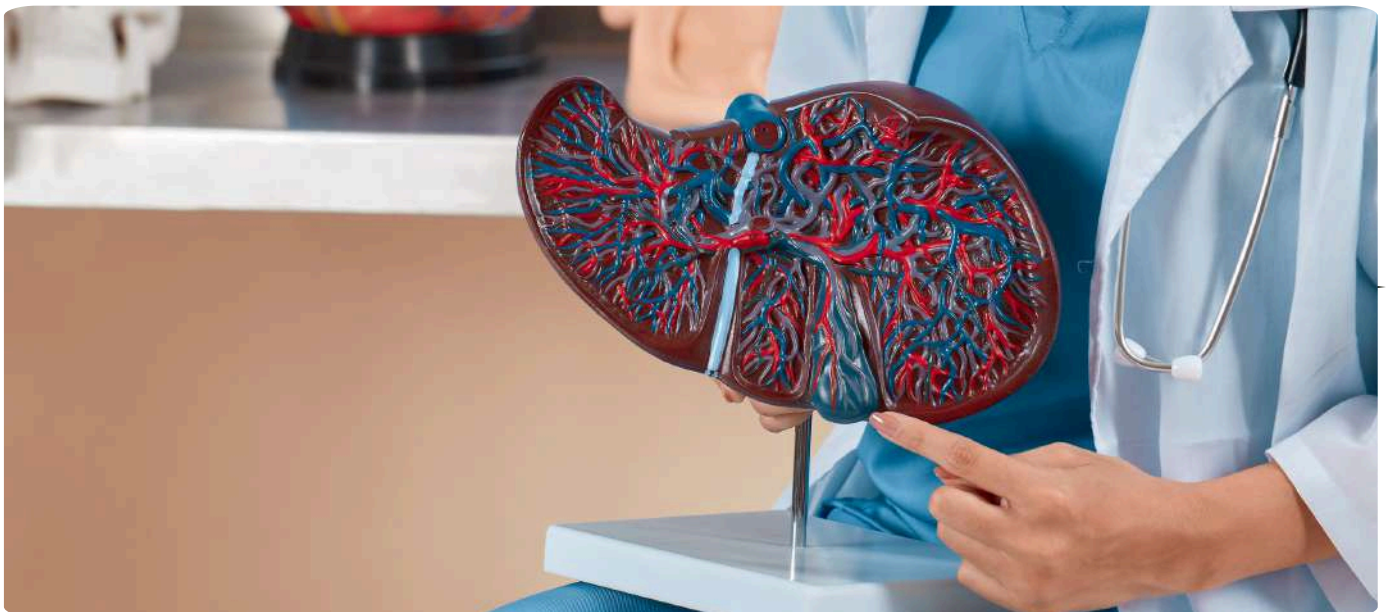
## 2. Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD)

### Cause

NAFLD occurs when excess fat builds up in the liver without alcohol consumption being the cause. It is strongly linked to obesity, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, and a sedentary lifestyle.

### Symptoms

- Usually silent in early stages
- Persistent tiredness or malaise
- Mild discomfort on the right side of the abdomen
- Occasionally, an enlarged liver



## **Treatment**

- Weight management through a balanced diet and regular physical activity
- Control of blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels
- Avoid sugary drinks, processed foods, and excess salt
- Medications may be prescribed to manage associated metabolic conditions

## **3. Liver Cirrhosis**

### **Cause**

Cirrhosis is the final stage of chronic liver damage, where healthy liver tissue is replaced with scar tissue. This scarring impairs blood flow through the liver and reduces its ability to function.



Cirrhosis can result from:

- Long-term alcohol use
- Chronic hepatitis B or C infection
- Untreated or advanced NAFLD

### **Symptoms**

- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
- Swelling in legs and abdomen (ascites)
- Easy bruising and bleeding
- Confusion, memory problems, or drowsiness (hepatic encephalopathy)
- Severe fatigue



## **Treatment**

- Early detection is crucial to slow disease progression
- Complete abstinence from alcohol
- Medications to reduce complications such as fluid buildup or infections
- Regular monitoring by a liver specialist
- In severe cases, a liver transplant may be the only option

## **Protecting Your Liver: Prevention is the Best Cure**

- Limit or avoid alcohol consumption.
- Maintain a healthy weight through diet and exercise.
- Eat a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, and whole grains.
- Avoid excessive sugar, processed foods, and trans fats.
- Get vaccinated against hepatitis A and B.
- Schedule regular medical check-ups, especially if you have risk factors such as obesity, diabetes, or a history of alcohol use.

## **Final Word**

The liver is a resilient organ that can often heal itself if damage is detected early and lifestyle changes are made. However, once liver disease progresses to cirrhosis, recovery becomes difficult. By raising awareness about liver health, we can encourage people to make healthier choices and seek medical attention at the earliest signs of trouble.

**Remember — a healthy liver means a healthier, longer life.**



# The Bright Side:

## How Light Affects Your Mental Health

**By: Taranjit Singh Bsc -Peer Support RRSL**



Light does more than illuminate our surroundings; it plays a powerful role in shaping our mental health. Our internal body clock, or circadian rhythm, is finely tuned to the natural light-dark cycle. When that cycle is disrupted, so too are our mood, sleep, and overall well-being.

Insufficient daylight can contribute to symptoms of depression, while too much artificial light at night, especially blue light from phones, tablets, and TVs, can interfere with sleep and heighten the risk of anxiety, depression, and other mood disorders.

### **The Mental Health Impact of Light**

- Circadian Rhythm Disruption
- Bright light at night can confuse your internal clock, leading to poor sleep quality and increased risk of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.
- Sleep and Mood Interference
- Nighttime light suppresses melatonin, the hormone that signals it's time to sleep. The result? Restless nights and mood disturbances.

- Different Light, Different Effects
  - Natural daylight: Regular exposure during the day helps reduce the risk of depression.
  - Artificial nighttime light (ALAN): Linked to mood disorders and disrupted sleep patterns.
  - Blue light: Found in screens, this specific wavelength is especially potent at disrupting sleep-wake cycles.
- A Small But Real Boost
- A recent meta-analysis found light exposure to have a small-to-moderate positive impact on overall well-being.

### **Tips to Manage Light for Better Mental Health**

- Soak in the morning sun.
- Aim to get outside in the early hours; it's one of the best ways to anchor your circadian rhythm.
- Let Natural Light in.
- Arrange your workspace near windows to maximize daylight exposure throughout the day.
- Cut Back on Nighttime Light
  - Power down screens at least an hour before bed.
  - Use blue-light filters and dim settings on devices.
  - Keep electronics out of the bedroom.
- Try Light Therapy
- Especially during darker months, a light therapy box may help realign your body clock and elevate mood.
- Use Lighting to Set the Mood
- Warm, soft lighting creates a cozy, calming space, while cool tones can enhance focus and clarity.

If you're experiencing persistent mental health challenges, consult a qualified professional. Light may help, but it's only one part of a bigger picture.



# National Breastfeeding Week

By: **Shruti Kaushal, SHPP Nursing Placement Student**



Every drop counts! That's the truth of breastfeeding. As we mark National Breastfeeding Week, it's the time to celebrate the everlasting bond between a mother and a baby, and to raise awareness about the lifelong benefits of breastfeeding for both.

Colostrum- the first milk is nature's first vaccine, packed with antibodies, nutrients, and enzymes that help to strengthen the baby's immune system, protect against infections, and help support healthy growth. Additionally, for mothers, breastfeeding lowers the risk of breast and ovarian cancers, type 2 diabetes, and postpartum depression. Yet, breastfeeding is not always easy.

New mothers may often face challenges like pain, issues related to latching, or a lack of support. That is the reason this week is also a call to action to help build communities that empower mothers who make breastfeeding easier through accurate information, compassionate care, and workplace policies.

Health care providers, families and friends all play a role. Normalizing conversations about breastfeeding, providing privacy in public spaces, and offering encouragement. All these small steps can make a real difference.

This National Breastfeeding Week, let's move beyond awareness to action, creating a society where every mother feels supported to give her baby the best start in life, and is celebrated as a shared responsibility.

# HPV Prevention Week: A Call to Action for All



**By: Fariha Abdul Muqueet,  
Preventative Care Specialist, SHPP**



**HPV Prevention Week** (October 4–11) is observed annually to shine a spotlight on a critical but often overlooked public health issue: human papillomavirus (HPV). Since 2017, Canada has led the way by devoting an entire week to raising awareness about HPV and the cancers and diseases it can cause. This initiative is powered by the Canada vs HPV campaign, which unites medical experts, survivors, advocates, and families to share clear information and actionable steps.

## **Why it matters**

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection globally, and in Canada it's estimated that 75% of sexually active Canadians will experience at least one HPV infection in their lifetime. Most cases are not severely symptomatic and do not require extensive treatment but for a minority, persistent HPV infections can lead to cancers (cervical, anal, penile, head and neck) or genital warts.



### Prevention is key

The most powerful tool is vaccination. In Canada, the **9-valent HPV vaccine (9vHPV)** is recommended and provides protection against the HPV types most associated with cancer, as well as types causing genital warts. New guidance from Public Health Agency of Canada suggests:

- Ages 9–20 (unless immunocompromised): one dose is generally sufficient
- Ages 21–26: two doses, six months apart
- Beyond 26: vaccination may still be offered with shared decision-making

### Screening and testing

For people with a cervix, **cervical cancer screening** is a key safeguard. HPV testing is gradually replacing or augmenting Pap tests, because it can detect the virus before abnormal cells develop. Self-collection (i.e. collecting one’s own sample) is also being rolled out to make screening more accessible.

### Taking action at PCHS

During HPV Prevention Week, PCHS aims to reach students, staff, and families with the message: HPV prevention is everyone’s responsibility. Together, we can change the narrative by advocating for vaccinating and screening





# ADHD Awareness Month

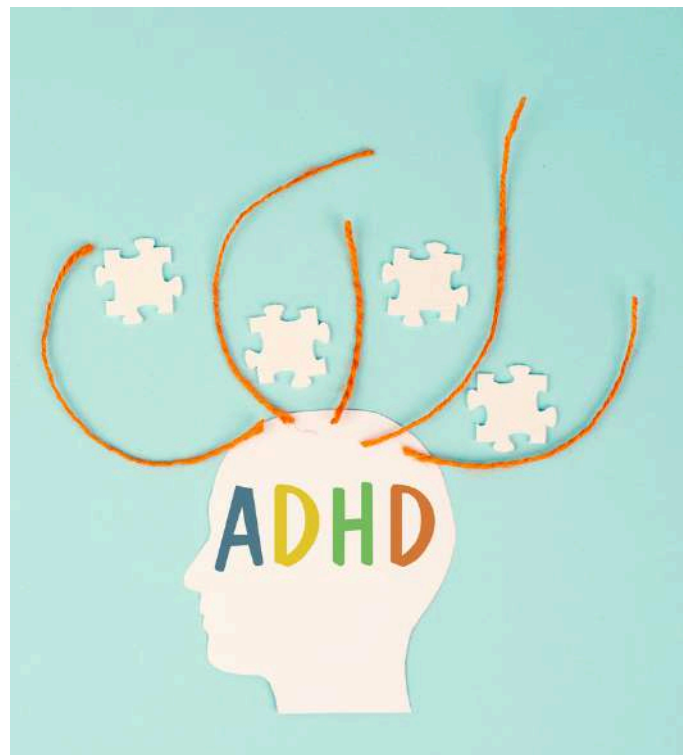
**By: Nicole, SHPP Nursing  
Placement Student**



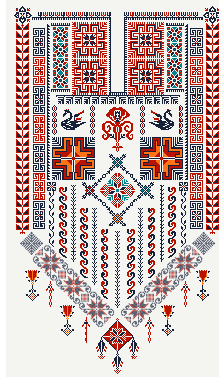
For many years, ADHD was viewed as a childhood disorder that mostly affected energetic boys who could not sit still. But today, more research reveals a different story, where countless women and girls have gone undiagnosed, overlooked, neglected and misunderstood. ADHD in women translates differently, it often looks less like hyperactivity and more like mental overload: constant multitasking, forgetfulness, and an exhausting drive for perfection. Many girls learn to “mask” their symptoms to fit social expectations, leading to quiet struggles with anxiety, low self-esteem, and burnout.

Hormonal changes can make things even more complex. Women with ADHD are more likely to experience premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD), a severe form of PMS that can intensify emotional symptoms like mood swings, irritability, and depression. These fluctuations often worsen ADHD symptoms, making focus and emotional regulation even harder during certain times of the menstrual cycle. Without diagnosis, women may internalize blame for their difficulties, believing they’re disorganized or lazy. This not only delays treatment but can also affect relationships, academic performance, and mental health.

Recognition changes everything. Understanding that ADHD can present differently in women opens doors to compassion and tailored care from therapy and medication to lifestyle strategies that enhance focus and balance. ADHD is not a flaw; it is a different way of processing the world. By understanding the female experience, we challenge stigma and move toward a more inclusive, informed understanding of neurodiversity.



# PCHS at the Community Outreach Picnic: A Day of Connection and Support



**By: Lina hassan- Short term counsellor**

As always, PCHS is proud to be present and ready to support whenever the opportunity arises. As part of our community outreach efforts, my colleague and I — in our roles as short-term counsellors on the Settlement Team — had the opportunity to participate in a vibrant community picnic hosted by Peel Palestinian Families (PPF), in collaboration with Mississauga-Streetsville 4 Palestine (MS4P) and the Palestinian Cultural Arts Collective (PCAC). The event brought together Mississauga residents, newcomers, and community leaders for an afternoon of connection, culture, and support.

The picnic was especially meaningful as it welcomed many newcomers from Gaza, offering them a warm and inclusive introduction to our community. It was truly inspiring to witness the strong sense of belonging and unity throughout the day.

We were honoured to meet and introduce ourselves to the Mayor of Mississauga, Mrs. Carolyn Parrish, who graciously took the time to speak with us and join us for a group photo. Her presence underscored the importance of supporting newcomers and creating a welcoming environment for all residents.



Throughout the event, we engaged with several families, listened to their stories, and shared heartfelt conversations. We also took the opportunity to highlight the extensive support Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) provides to the community — emphasizing our commitment to step in and assist wherever possible.

In our conversations with the event organizers, we explored meaningful ways PCHS can contribute to and support their ongoing efforts to help newcomers settle, connect, and thrive in their new home.

The day served as a powerful reminder of the strength of community and the importance of showing up — not just to commemorate, but to build lasting bridges and offer support where it is needed most.

# Diwali Celebrations With our Seniors

**By: Bhagwant Singh Saran,  
Volunteer - Geriatrics Department**

Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights, is celebrated by both Hindus and Sikhs with great joy and devotion. For Hindus, Diwali marks the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya after 14 years of exile, symbolizing the victory of light over darkness. For Sikhs, this day is also very special as it is celebrated as Bandi Chhor Divas, remembering the release of Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji along with 52 kings from Gwalior Fort (MP, India).

The event was full of happiness, energy, and togetherness. Seniors performed traditional and modern dances, sang songs, and everyone enjoyed delicious Indian food and sweets. The hall was beautifully decorated with lights, diyas, and colorful rangolis, creating a warm and festive atmosphere.





The seniors and staff of PCHS played a great role in making the event successful. Their teamwork and enthusiasm showed how cultural celebrations can bring everyone together like a family. It was heart-touching to see people from different backgrounds celebrating in unity and respect. It was very good getting together.

Besides cultural events, PCHS also focuses strongly on health and wellness. The organization spread awareness about mental health, physical fitness, healthy eating, and emotional well-being in the community. During the event, staff members also encouraged everyone to take care of their health while enjoying festive foods and to stay connected socially for good mental health. During cultural celebrations like Diwali, PCHS also focuses on spreading health awareness. Staff members and volunteers provide information about healthy eating habits, stress management, and mental well-being. People are encouraged to enjoy festive foods in moderation, drink enough water, and stay physically active even during celebrations.

PCHS also educates the community about the importance of mental health. They remind people to take breaks, spend time with loved ones, and seek support whenever they feel lonely or anxious. Mental wellness sessions and awareness booths help reduce stigma around mental health and encourage open conversations. The organization further promotes physical activity through group sessions- strength fit exercises, fitness challenges and meditation. For seniors and older adults, PCHS conducts health education sessions on managing chronic illnesses, staying socially connected, and maintaining independence.



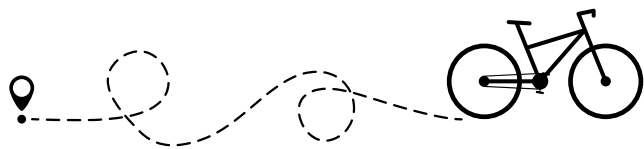
# 3rd Annual Diwali Glow Ride



**By: Sonia Maset, BSc, Project Coordinator, Different Spokes**

On Sunday, October 26, the Different Spokes Bike Hub team hosted the 3rd Annual Diwali Glow Ride in Downtown Brampton. The event brought together more than 60 riders, from those who just learned to cycle in 2025 to experienced commuters, representing diverse ages, ethnicities, and faiths to celebrate light's triumph over darkness.





Cyclists were encouraged to decorate their bikes creatively, with a C17 Brooks saddle awarded to the “Most Lit” rider. After a safety briefing outside City Hall, participants set out on a 12 km group ride at conversation pace, guided by a ride leader, sweeper, marshal, and DJ. The route featured Brampton’s Active Transportation network and quieter side streets, creating a vibrant display that drew cheers and photos from passersby.



“With the huge group, I’ve never had so much fun riding a bike or felt safer riding on the road” said a participant who learned how to ride a bike this year through the department’s “Woman Learn-to-Ride” program.

Following a group photo at Garden Square, riders gathered at Different Spokes for an after-party featuring chai and samosas from Nitro Cow. Events like this embody PCHS’s commitment to inclusion, health, and community wellness, promoting active living and togetherness for all.





# Haunted Hangout:

## A Spooktacular Night for Newcomer Youth

**By: Michelle Yousofi – Youth Worker**

The Community Connections: Children and Youth Program hosted a thrilling Haunted Hangout event, bringing together newcomer youth for an evening filled with creativity, laughter, and Halloween fun. The event provided a welcoming and festive space for youth to express themselves and connect with others while celebrating the spooky season.





Participants had the chance to design their own pumpkin paintings on site, enjoy festive face painting, and take part in pumpkin carving before heading home with a spooky goodie bag. From colorful pumpkins to creative face designs, the youth showcased their imagination and artistic talents in every activity.



The evening was filled with excitement, music, and laughter as youth shared stories, made new friends, and built confidence through hands-on fun. Many participants expressed how much they enjoyed being part of a group where they could be themselves and celebrate in a safe, inclusive space.

The Haunted Hangout not only celebrated Halloween but also highlighted the importance of community, creativity, and connection—making it a memorable night that left everyone looking forward to the next event.







## Person-Centric and Culturally Appropriate Settlement Service Delivery: Presentation at OCASI Conference by PCHS Staff

**By: Disha Mehta – Youth Worker**

The Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) settlement team proudly participated in the OCASI Professional Development Conference, where Youth Worker Disha Mehta and Vaishnavi delivered an engaging 1.5-hour presentation on “Settlement Service Delivery System: A Culturally Appropriate and Person-Centric Approach.”

The interactive session brought together 15 professionals from the settlement sector to explore the meaning of culture, and the difference between person-centric and system-centric care. Through reflective discussions and activities on power and privilege and cultural lens, participants gained deeper insight into how cultural awareness and empathy shape effective service delivery.

Disha also highlighted how PCHS has adapted its policies and programs to ensure services are inclusive, culturally sensitive, and grounded in the lived experiences of clients. The session fostered meaningful conversations and left participants inspired to integrate culturally responsive practices within their own organizations.

# Feeling inspired after attending the OCSA Community Connect 2025 Conference!

PCHS had the opportunity to join over 400 professionals from the home and community care sector and across healthcare for important conversations about the challenges and opportunities shaping our field.

This was our second year attending, and once again, it was an amazing experience to connect with sector leaders, exchange ideas, and gain new perspectives on how we can continue to strengthen home and community care in Ontario.

Thank you to the **Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA)** for bringing together such a passionate group of individuals dedicated to improving the lives of those we serve.



# *PCHS In The Community*



*Halloween Celebrations  
with PCHS Seniors*



*Haunted Hangout - A Spooktacular  
Night for Newcomer Youth*



*Settlement and Employment Staff  
Professional Development and  
Networking Forum 2025*



*Attended the OCSA Community  
Connect 2025 Conference*

# Uncle Vinny's Toy Drive: Turning Grief Into Giving



**By: Sandy Mann, Creative Director,  
Uncle Vinny's Toy Drive – GTA**



Uncle Vinny's Toy Drive was founded in the memory of a grandson, son, brother, friend and uncle! Vinny was only 35 years old when he passed away unexpectedly. Not knowing how to process this grief, his family in Vancouver and Toronto came together and thought how can we all as a collective carry on with a bit of a lighter heart.

Losing Vinny changed everything. None of us, especially us kids, ever imagined we'd be the ones consoling our parents over the loss of our brother. It felt backwards. A day or two after his passing, my emotions went numb as I focused on comforting our parents. I remember thinking, "He was my brother too." In that moment, I realized that grief doesn't fit neatly into traditional family roles — especially in Punjabi households, where emotions often remain unspoken. We were all crumbling in silence, feeling lonely, neglected, and heartbroken. Imagine all these feelings, it was heartwrenching.

So how could we turn this sorrow into something magical?

Vinny's favourite time of the year was Christmas – he loved everything about it: setting up the tree, eating lots of food, laughing, smiling and making memories with his loved ones. The thing that brought Vinny the most joy was making kids happy. I remember, every Christmas he would go out and buy all the kids attending his home for a Christmas celebration, the best toys. His face had the biggest smile when handing them out, he was clearly the favourite Uncle.



That joy and generosity became the inspiration for Uncle Vinny's Toy Drive, created in his hometown of Surrey, BC, and his second home, Toronto. Our mission is simple: to make the holidays a little more magical and filled with love for as many children as possible.

At first, some of our elders were skeptical. The idea of starting a charity was foreign to them — they didn't quite grasp how something as small as a toy could make such a big impact on a child's life. But my sisters and I were determined. We bundled up in our winter jackets, mitts, and toques, and hit the cold streets of Brampton to hand-deliver over 2,500 flyers across four neighbourhoods, inviting everyone to our "pop-up drive-through donation" event.

What happened next was nothing short of extraordinary. Strangers showed up with flyers in one hand and bags of toys in the other, their hearts full of empathy. Support poured in from every direction — a Purolator delivery woman who saw our flyer, came to the address just to tell us that she saw our efforts and took extra copies to hand out the rest of her route, the friends of friends who came through, the people that shared our initiative in their group chats, and the local businesses that hosted toy donation boxes.

We didn't anticipate the amount of support we would receive or the community we were building. We are truly blessed. Year one, we collected a total of 1705 toys, valued at \$43,000, serving over 1000 families. To date, Uncle Vinny's Toy Drive has donated a total of 4,072 toys, valued at \$97,900 and serving over 2000 families through the Salvation Army and THIS could not have been done without our community. Thank YOU!

Looking back over the last four years, the number of children we've helped brings immense pride. But perhaps the greatest transformation has been within our own family. Now, as a family that could not say Vinny's name without shedding a tear, I see Vinny's Dad, Mom and Uncles ask how many toys we've collected, setting up the toys themselves in front of the Christmas Tree as we receive donations and asking what we have planned for the coming year. We now walk around smiling, remembering him not through pain, but through the joy we bring to others in his name. Loss will always be loss, but we learned that giving back is a powerful way to heal.

This year, we have partnered with PCHS and Seva to help us serve local families within the Greater Toronto Area. It's Year 5, and I wanted to make this year special, so how could we honour Vinny even better? He would be ecstatic knowing that we are hosting our first family friendly, Mehfil event in his name. This not only includes his love for soulful music, dance, togetherness (in his name, of course), love, laughter, but giving back. All proceeds from this event will be used to support PCHS and Seva in buying toys for children this holiday season. So, help us, help our local communities bring smiles across more children's faces than ever before. Together, we can move mountains!

Join us, and be part of Vinny's legacy.

Dil Di Mehfil

November 16, 2025 | 2 PM – 6 PM

Elite Banquet Hall – 1850 Albion Road, Toronto



**To learn more or to support Uncle Vinny's Toy Drive, visit us on Instagram: @UncleVinnysToyDrive**



# WELCOME

## NEW STAFF



**Smita Dave**  
Bookkeeper



**Manprit Duhra**  
Case manager MHA  
Wellbeing program



**Rashamdeep Sandhu**  
Peer Support  
Program Coordinator



**Avneet Kaur**  
CNC Childminer



**Manvi Manvi**  
Program Support  
Worker



**Vaishnavi Kadam**  
HR & Payroll  
Administrative Support



**Neelam Bal**  
Case Manager,  
Mental Health

# Wholesome Bites Workshop




MAKE HEALTHY SNACKS WITH US

Join us for an engaging World Diabetes Day workshop and learn how to prepare quick, delicious, and healthy snacks with ease!

 **Friday, November 14, 2025**

 **5:30PM – 7:30PM**

 **Room 101, 60 West Drive,  
Brampton, ON L6T 3T6**



**Scan this QR code  
to register or...**

 **437-243-3735**

 **SUPPORTLINE@PCHS4U.COM**





# GRIEF COUNSELLING PROGRAM

SERVICES ARE  
PROVIDED IN PERSON  
AND VIRTUALLY  
Our Services Include:

- ✓ One-on-one and group grief counselling
- ✓ Support for grief and bereavement
- ✓ Trauma-informed and holistic care approach

For more information please contact:

**Jaslene Singh**  
**(416) 579-4142**  
Jaslene.singh@pchs4u.com






[www.pchs4u.com](http://www.pchs4u.com)



# 12TH ANNUAL FRIENDS OF PCHS

Join us for an engaging afternoon celebrating community, collaboration, and the positive impact of PCHS programs.

-  **Connect** with community members and leaders.
-  **Discover** how PCHS is making a difference.
-  **Contribute** your voice to shape the future.

**Together, let's build lasting connections for a better tomorrow.**



**November 29, 2025**  
*(Saturday)*



**12:00 PM - 3:00 PM**

12:00 - 1:00 PM - Lunch/networking

1:00 - 3:00 PM - Community engagement session



**Natraj Banquet Hall**

7275 Torbram Rd,  
Mississauga, ON L4T 1G8



**Register Now!**



Scan this QR code  
to register OR  
[Click here](#)

**Registration starts at 11:30 AM!**

# FINDING & BUYING A HOME IN CANADA



**November  
29th, 2025  
(Saturday)  
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM**

 **Via ZOOM**

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Permanent Residents
- Convention Refugees
- Live-in-Caregivers

## TOPIC POINTS

- ✓ How to save and pay for your home
- ✓ Finding a home as first time homebuyer
- ✓ Home buying program and incentives

## FREE INFORMATION SESSION

### REGISTRATION CONTACT:

**SHARON UY**  
**(437) 213-3973**  
[SHARON.UY@PCHS4U.COM](mailto:SHARON.UY@PCHS4U.COM)

Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada





# Project Khushi Donations



We kindly request that donated products are **new**, with the exception of toys. If you choose to donate used toys, please make sure they can be properly sanitized or wiped down. Please note that we are unable to accept used stuffed toys.



**We enthusiastically welcome all new items, and we appreciate your generosity.**



## Brampton Donation Location

60 West Drive,  
Unit 202

&

## Malton Donation Location

2980 Drew Road  
Mississauga, Ontario  
Unit 241

**Please feel free to contribute any of the following items as a donation:**

- Female Products:** Sanitary Pads, Tampons, etc.
- Hygiene Products:** Body wash, Shampoo, Conditioner, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Deodorant, Mouthwash, etc.
- Clothing:** Hats, Gloves, Socks (Male, Female, and Kids), Jackets, etc.
- Food:** Canned Goods (Beans, Lentils, Soups), Dry Goods (Pasta, Flour, Rice), Oil, Spices (Black Pepper and Salt), etc.
- Baby Items:** Baby Food, Diapers, Baby Wipes, Formula, etc.
- Toys:** New toys of any kind are welcome for all ages: cars, barbies, etc. Used toys must be properly sanitized/ wiped.

# Project Khushi

...by PCHS



**Project Khushi returns to PCHS for Year Four !**

**December 9, 2025**  
**5:30 PM-7:30 PM**  
at 60 West Drive, Brampton ON  
Unit 101



**December 11, 2025**  
**5:30 PM - 7:30 PM**  
at Malton Youth Hub  
(3545 Morning Star Drive)



Our SHPP team has relaunched this initiative to support our community members by distributing a variety of essential items, including hygiene kits, blankets, warm gloves, socks, toys, and much more!



**Clients must pre-register or can be assessed on a walk-in basis for the event.**

To receive toys, children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at the event.



SCAN ME

**Click this QR code to register**

OR Call

 **437-243-3735**

Join Community Connections: Children  
and Youth at:

# Voices in Color

12:00PM TO 4:00PM

**NOVEMBER 22ND 2025**

**LUNCH AND  
DRINKS  
PROVIDED!**

Location: Malton Youth Hub  
Room 202

3545 Morning Star Dr,  
Mississauga, ON L4T 2V3

**Create Fun and Unique Beaded  
Creations out of Fuse Beads!**

**Eligibility:**  
Ages 8-20  
Permanent  
Resident  
Conventional  
Refugee

**To Register or More  
Information Contact:**

Michelle Yousofi  
Michelle.Yousofi@pcsh4u.com  
(416) 859-4264

Disha Mehta  
Disha.mehta@pchs4u.com  
905-872-3517

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and Citizenship Canada

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et Citoyenneté Canada



# CLIENT TESTIMONIAL



“You have been such a tremendous help. I so appreciate anything you can help with. This is such an amazing and supportive service. And I appreciate not being judged as no one wants to be in this situation but some of us don’t have supports around us who can help.”

*Client: Sahara Health Promotion*

# PCHS 2024-2025 Impact Report is now Available



## 2024-2025 IMPACT REPORT



[WWW.PCHS4U.COM](http://WWW.PCHS4U.COM)





# 23<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL IWD GALA SPONSORS

## Platinum Sponsor



AJAX | BRAMPTON  
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& VISITATION CENTRE  
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Emerald Medical  
Practice



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humanendeavour.org

## Gold Sponsor



CHANGE IS POSSIBLE  
COUNSELLING SERVICES



Social  
Planning  
Council of  
Peel

## Bronze Sponsor



Hardeep Mann CPA  
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION



## Community Supporters

Kulwinder Grewal

Brij Khanna

Kal Choksi

The Hybrid Group

Jaswinder Kaur Bassan

Tarandeep Bhui

7 Star Kitchen Cabinets Ltd.

Mobility Speciality Inc.

In memory of RCMP Constable Harvey Dhami



## PCHS Locations

### Head Office:

2980 Drew Road, Unit 241  
Mississauga, ON L4T 0A7

### Brampton Office Location:

60 West Drive, Unit 202 and 101,  
Brampton, ON, L6T 3T6

### Community Door:

7700 Hurontario St, Unit 1300,  
Bampton, ON, L6Y 4M3

### Dewside Drive:

2 Dewside Dr, Unit 202,  
Brampton, ON, L6R 3Y5


### Different Spokes:

8 Nelson Street West  
Brampton ON, L6X 1B7

### Southfields Community Center:

225 Dougall Ave.  
Caledon, ON L7C 3M7



 **905-677-0889**

 **info@pchs4u.com**

 **www.pchs4u.com**



SCAN TO DONATE

OR

CLICK [HERE](#)