

YORK UNIVERSITY-TD COMMUNITY

ENGAGEMENT CENTRE 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

MANDATE

The York University-TD Community Engagement Centre supports the University's commitment to build a more engaged university by facilitating mutually-beneficial collaborations between York University and the Black Creek community.

The CEC is a pan-university resource centre situated in the Black Creek Community that:

- Fosters academic innovation in teaching and learning through community engaged pedagogy and **experiential education** opportunities
- Supports **post-secondary educational attainment** among community residents and the development of academic pathway
- Enhances capacity of York faculty/students and community partners to work collaboratively on **community-based research**.

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YEAR IN REVIEW

This report truly is a snap shot of activities this past year, too many to include on these pages. We hope however, to give you a sense of what we have been doing in 2015 to support university-community engagement. This year we focused on building our staff team and deepening relationships in the community. Much of that was in schools, offering a range of interactive activities that got kids thinking about their place in PSE. We even joined our Admissions colleagues as they visited the local highschools in the Fall.

We continue to be active on community planning tables such as the Black Creek Community Collaborative and the Jane Finch TSNS Taskforce. Both these groups raise awareness and action around complex issues in the community. Our ear is always to the ground for opportunities for meaningful York collaboration. We co-chair the Black Creek Financial Action Network and this group continues to not only develop tools and resources for financial empowerment, but advocate for economic inclusion for community residents. Our Catalyst Grants brought us together with new partners and projects. The ideas abound in the JF community!

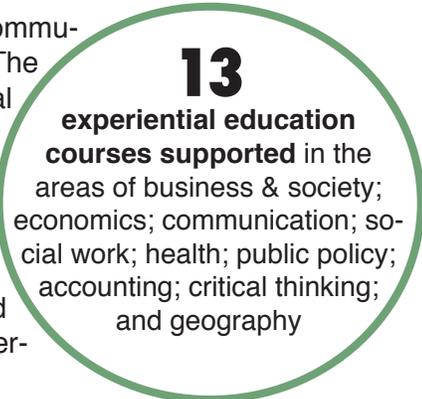
On campus we valued the opportunity to speak directly to students about community based research, and EE "etiquette" when involved directly in community - ie. recognizing power and privilege, expectations, sensitivity to a community context and so on. We also valued the relationships built with individual professors, Faculties, and other departments at York. They are such a talented and committed group of folks.

We want to thank the TD Bank for their financial support and York University for continuing to champion community engagement as a concept that makes communities and post-secondary institutions stronger. Finally, we recognize the many community residents, leaders and workers for their ideas and energy as together we imagine what is possible when we join forces.

Lorna Schwartztruber, Manager

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT

Getting York students into the local community helps put the theory into context. The CEC helps connect York to the local community. This was done through introductions to organizations, presentations to classes, hosting of classes and events at the CEC, supervising placement students, supporting volunteer recruitment that thinks local, and advising faculty on community partnerships.



NEWCOMER EDUCATION ATTAINMENT & TRAINING (N.E.A.T.)

N.E.A.T. PILOT PROJECT

42

attended Info Session



19

met one on one to make a plan



12

went on to:

- Improve English (2)
- Enroll in Academic Upgrading (4)
- Enroll in PSE (2)
- Planned to enroll in PSE (1)
- Obtained employment (3)

We are making it easier for Newcomers to find the information they need to act on their educational aspirations. We developed a pilot project in 2014-15 to see if making a supported plan that recognizes both academic and personal goal setting would make a difference for students accessing PSE. We partnered with Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) for the “life issues” support (income, housing, childcare) and Seneca College and York U for “academic issues” support. We learned that these supports do make a difference in people taking the next steps to pursuing educational and employment goals.

Continuing to work with our valued partners – Seneca College, Toronto Employment and Social Services, Council of Educators Toronto, and Humber College, together we hosted over 100 participants in a Newcomer PSE Event at York in October 2016 that included panels of educators, employers, and students. We included networking opportunity and a marketplace of resources and programs. It was such a success we look forward to another event in 2016.



2015 PAN-AM GAMES

2015 brought the Pan Am Summer Games to Toronto and to York University. We helped facilitate a community Artisans Market near the Track and Field Venue at York University where 15 local artisans sold their work over 5 days during the events. We hosted a number of community meetings that focused on community awareness and participation in the events surrounding the Pan Am Games.

York was well represented at the Torch relay at its Jane and Finch stop.



BLACK CREEK FINANCIAL ACTION NETWORK (BCFAN)

BCFAN is a network of 20 organizations working in strengthening Financial Literacy, co-chaired by Lorna Schwartzentruber of the CEC, and Elena Jara of Credit Canada. BCFAN meets 6 times per year. This year the Network shared our ideas with the Provincial Government on regulating fringe financial services such as Pay Day Loans. We met with the Literacy Leader of Canada to discuss the importance of sustainable financial empowerment programs in low-income communities, we presented at the ABLE Conference and the FLAG Roundtable. Many of our organizations participated in Credit Week activities and BCFAN organized a community information table in the local Mall.



CONNECT THE DOTS

15 students came together over 18 hours during the Winter Term to participate in an orientation to working in the community. The sessions were taught by the “Connect the Dots” Coalition (a training coalition of residents and community workers), and the topics covered included looking at the issue of stigma and how it is perpetuated, power and privilege, media bias and in particular anti-black bias, historical and present day issues in the community, thinking about ally-ship, and an interactive community tour. Through this training, we believe that students will contribute better and faster in placements or other projects that take place in the local community.

DID YOU KNOW?

We have logged more volunteer hours of any other accounting program participating in the CPA Tax Preparation Assistance program, placing first in the Government/Academe Level each year.

209 people were served.

TAX PREP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The CEC in partnership with York University’s School of Administrative Studies and the Atkinson Professional Accounting Association (APAA) worked with the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario (CPA Ontario) to hold Income Tax Sessions during the months of March and April. These sessions help low-income individuals fill out their tax returns. We serve families and seniors who reside in the community surrounding York, including many new immigrants to Canada.

542 people stopped by our office to find out more about , partnerships, employment information, what is the CEC, volunteer opportunities, and more.

Our top three inquiries were:



- Admissions
- Employment
- Community referrals

36% of visitors to the CEC were actively participating in programs, workshops, research activities, and special events.

The Jane and Finch First Year Student Network was established to create a peer network of first year students from the local community who attend York. Over 40 students joined FYN for the 2015-2016 and the number continues to grow monthly. Nathan Stern oversees the program with the support of work-study and Social Work students who provide one on one support, and host workshops based on topics chosen by FYN students.

FYN takes a unique approach to supporting students. Students have an active voice in the development of programming and services. Through their input, workshops and events are planned that support the success of FYN students. As the 2016-2017 school year approaches, we are looking to further grow FYN.

FIRST YEAR NETWORK (FYN)



"AHQAHIZU:" INUIT STONE CARVING FOR OUR COMMUNITY



Professor Anna Hudson and Inuit Master Carvers Koomuatuk (Kuzy) Sapa Curley and Ruben Anton Komangapiik joined with the CEC to bring Inuit stone carving to Jane Finch. Ahqahizu is the Inuktitut word for the game of soccer. Curley and Komangapiik were commissioned through a project led by Dr. Hudson to carve a monumental sculpture to be housed on the York U campus as a permanent addition to the university's art collection signaling a commitment to our university community that is collectively engaged in the current realities of climate change, food security, and arctic sovereignty for Inuit in Canada.

The CEC worked with local Jane Finch high schools to identify 10 local youth leaders to participate in 5 stone carving workshops on campus. The youth learned various stone carving techniques and then carved their own piece of stone. The 10 projects were unveiled at a reception at the CEC where the youth spoke about their learning experience and their stone carvings. Two of the youth were selected by Curley and Komangapiik as paid assistants on the larger carving project over the summer.

CATALYST GRANT RECIPIENTS

PEACH - Promoting Education and Community Health

created a technology hub to encourage positive learning experiences in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)

Black Creek Community Farm Residents Council

used videography to deepen resident council and board planning at the farm

BRiCK by Brick (Building Resilience in Caregivers and Kids)

designed an initiative to improve infant and mother mental health by piloting a creative universal screening and support program

The Jane and Finch Environmental Justice Project

infused art into an environmental justice conference

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy Planning Group

documented resident perspectives, and provided recommendations in response to the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy

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Catalyst Grants totaling \$30,000 were distributed for projects between a York and Community Partner.

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