

LaMarsh Centre for Child & Youth Research Newsletter

Fall 2022 Issue | February 2023



The LaMarsh Centre for Child & Youth Research is a collaborative group of faculty and students that supports community-engaged interdisciplinary research in health, education, relationships, and development of infants, children, adolescents, emerging adults, and families everywhere. The Centre conducts leading edge research and mobilizes knowledge in ways that improve wellbeing and resilience for children and youth.

Our newsletter aims to share some of this incredible work and provide updates to the LaMarsh Community.

[Visit our website](#) to learn more about the research that is done at LaMarsh.

Director's Message

Dr. Rebecca Bassett-Gunter, LaMarsh Centre Director



Happy New Year! Hard to believe we are facing 2023! The new year brings about renewed energy, enthusiasm, and planning. It is also a great time to reflect on the successes and challenges of the previous year. The following newsletter provides a recap on Fall 2022 activities at the LaMarsh Centre for Child & Youth Research. The LaMarsh Centre is home to a vibrant, interdisciplinary group of community-engaged scholars including graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty members. I invite you to explore our faculty and trainee pages, to see the incredible breadth of expertise that has found a home in our organized research unit.

I think the fall term was exciting and challenging for us all. The “full return to campus” has been difficult and exciting in many ways. At LaMarsh, I have been pleased to serve in the role of Interim Director this term although that has come with challenges as well! I am grateful for the support and patience of our Community.

We have had a relatively busy fall! We held our Dr. Eric Jackman Health Scholars Learning Forum which was an amazing opportunity for our members to be together for the first time in several years! For me, this event felt symbolic of the value of our group as a Community and highlighted our commitment to knowledge mobilization to impact the lives of children and youth.

In line with our commitment to knowledge mobilization, we piloted a LaMarsh Knowledge Mobilization course in collaboration with the York KMb Unit. Graduate students from various disciplines were able to develop knowledge and skills in order to integrate knowledge mobilization into their own training and research. We look forward to offering this opportunity to LaMarsh graduate students in the future!

We were pleased to have the opportunity to provide support to four recipients of the Graduate Student Leadership Award this year. The purpose of our Leadership Award is to provide opportunities for LaMarsh graduate students to enhance their research leadership skills and experience. Congratulations to Katie Disimino, Julia Ferreira Gomes, Teresa Sellitto, and Nisha Vashi! You can read more about our wonderful student leaders below.

We have also adjudicated applications for our Graduate Student Research Award, which is designed to enable students to gain additional research experience and receive research mentoring while participating in inter-disciplinary research initiatives that align with the LaMarsh Centre's mandate. We are pleased to announce the following graduate students as this year's recipients: Shauna Spirling, Oana Bucsea, Meaghall Hall, Ana Radmilovic, Marette Abdelmaseh, Nadha Hassen, Carly Goodman, Sepehr Rassi, Alaa Ibrahim, Victoria Mousses, and Stephanie McKenzie. Congratulations!

A reminder to consider identifying LaMarsh as your home research unit if you are submitting any grant applications in 2023. This is important to ensure your work is highlighted in our annual report. You can also consider including research funds in your grant budget to come

back to the Centre to support administration (which in turn can support your research team). If you have any questions about this matter or need further information please do not hesitate to reach out.

Please see below for some highlights of all that we have accomplished in the past few months. We look forward to holding various events and continuing to collaborate in 2023. I personally look forward to getting to know more LaMarsh members and continuing to learn with this amazing Community.

If you have any questions or comments, contact lamarsh@yorku.ca

Best wishes for a happy and healthy start to 2023!

Article of the Season

Each season, the LaMarsh Centre for Child & Youth Research highlights an article that has been produced by one of our members. Check out this issue's research spotlight, which comes from Dr. Yvonne Bohr's lab!

How did Nunavummiut youth cope during the COVID-19 pandemic? A qualitative exploration of the resilience of Inuit youth leaders involved in the I-SPARX project
Alaina Thomas, Yvonne Bohr, Jeffrey Hankey, Megis Oskalns, Jenna Barnhardt, & Chelsea Singoorie



Inuit youth in Northern Canada, while extremely resilient, experience significant mental health concerns such as disproportionate rates of suicide. Nunavummiut have been calling for increased resources for Inuit communities, including more culture-focused mental health prevention and intervention tools.

To address this concern, five Nunavut communities, together with Dr. Yvonne Bohr's research team and research partners across the Territory, have been undertaking a series of collaborative projects through the Making I-SPARX Fly in Nunavut initiative. These projects aim to assess an Inuit-focused psychoeducational video game for youth. In I-SPARX, players complete challenges to learn cognitive behavioural therapy strategies that aim to promote improved mental wellbeing. [Learn more about the I-SPARX program.](#)

As part of this ongoing work which continued during the COVID-19 pandemic, the team recently examined the impact of the pandemic on youth leaders who were involved in the I-SPARX project. This research, led by Master's student Alaina Thomas, was designed to understand how the pandemic affected participants' wellbeing and their involvement in the project. Participants' coping mechanisms and resilience strategies during the pandemic were explored, through the lens of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.

Virtual interviews were conducted among nine Inuit youth leaders. An inductive thematic analysis identified central themes from participants' responses. This study found that Inuit youth perceived the effects of the pandemic to be fluctuating in periods of normalcy and periods of severe restriction. Several coping mechanisms to promote positive youth wellbeing were identified: Pathways to resilience included engagement in sports and cultural hobbies, social connectedness, community support, and participation in I-SPARX.

This study provides a glimpse into Inuit youth's experiences and coping during the pandemic. Findings may be used to inform future research on how to support Inuit youth in situations that limit their ability to engage in resilience-enhancing social activities.

[Read the published manuscript in the International Journal of Circumpolar Health.](#)



Past Events

The following events were hosted through the Centre over the fall term:

- The Dr. Eric Jackman Health Scholars Learning Forum was the first in-person event hosted by the Centre since our return to campus. Keynote speaker, Dr. Melanie Barwick, shared key teachings regarding how dissemination and implementation science can be used to achieve research impact. Additionally, talks were delivered by research teams from the labs of Dr. Yvonne Bohr and Dr. Debra Pepler, who received the Dr. Eric Jackman Health Scholars Award.
- The Young Indigenous Women's Utopia from Treaty 6 held an exciting day of workshops, artmaking, celebration, food, and a book launch. This event was hosted in collaboration with York University's Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Languages, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, and More than Words Research Project.
- The LaMarsh Centre for Child & Youth Research piloted a Knowledge Mobilization course in collaboration with the York KMb Unit. Graduate students from various disciplines were able to develop knowledge and skills in order to integrate knowledge mobilization into their own training and research.
- Dr. Nazilla Khanlou hosted a virtual presentation by Dr. Joyce Kamanzi, entitled Experiences of mothers using the Prevention Mother-to-Child Transmission Program to prevent human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) transmission in Rwanda.

- Dr. Nazilla Khanlou organized the 6th Lillian Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Health Learning Academy, a two-day event focusing on the promotion of maternal-child health and wellbeing during a global pandemic. This virtual event was well-attended by participants from various institutions, both within Canada and internationally. [Learn more about the event.](#)



Upcoming Events

We are excited to host the following events in 2023:

- LaMarsh Research Talks
- LaMarsh Annual Graduate Student Symposium

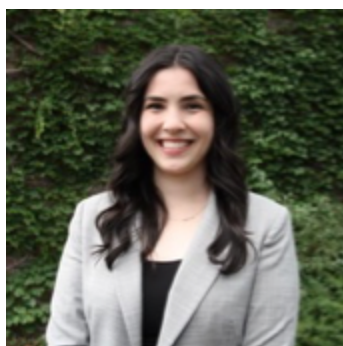
Stay tuned for more details!

Member Profiles

Congratulations to our 2022-2023 LaMarsh Graduate Student Leaders:

Teresa Sellitto

Supervisor: Dr. Jonathan Weiss **Department:** Psychology **Email:** tsellitt@yorku.ca



I am a first year PhD student in the Clinical-Developmental Psychology program. With the support of the LaMarsh Graduate Student Research Award during my Masters, I had the opportunity to expand on my research skills and gain first-hand experience with community-engaged research and knowledge mobilization. Now as a LaMarsh student leader, I intend to help facilitate trainee and community engagement, as well as foster a sense of community among faculty and trainees, which is particularly important as we resume in-person activities at York. My research focuses on understanding the factors that contribute to well-being and mental health for individuals with developmental disabilities. My Master's thesis employed a positive psychology lens to investigate the links between community assets, thriving, and mental health problems among youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I also explored the association between COVID-19-related stressors and mental health problems, and if thriving acted as a protective factor in this association. My dissertation will involve developing and validating a measure of flourishing for autistic youth. In order to understand how to best support flourishing in this population, developing a measure of flourishing in collaboration with autistic youth is a crucial first step.

Nisha Vashi

Supervisor: Dr. Jonathan Weiss **Department:** Psychology **Email:** nbvashi@yorku.ca



I am a first year PhD student in the Clinical-Developmental Psychology program. I am interested in exploring the factors that promote positive outcomes for families of autistic children and youth. My Master's thesis examined changes in the coherence of parents' representations following participation in a cognitive behavioural intervention for autistic children with mental health challenges, and associations with child treatment outcomes. For my dissertation, I will be utilizing a positive psychology framework to examine flourishing in ethnically diverse families of autistic children. This project will contribute to understanding how researchers can adopt a strengths-based perspective to explore how families of autistic children and youth can flourish in society. As a student leader, I hope to bring initiatives that enable LaMarsh members to collaborate, build interpersonal skills, and engage in knowledge mobilization. Through the organization of workshops, networking events, and research talks, I hope to promote the development of long-standing relationships and collaborations to foster the wellbeing of families, children, and youth.

Julia Ferreira Gomes

Supervisor: Dr. Lyndsay Hayhurst **Department:** Kinesiology **Email:** jfgomes@yorku.ca



I am a first year PhD student in the School of Kinesiology and Health Science. I am passionate about understanding and integrating gender and health equitable approaches into applied health research. My current research explores the use of a trauma- and violence-informed approach in sport for development and physical activity. I implement an intersectional feminist theoretical framework into my research. My personal leadership goals for the year with LaMarsh are to advance my experience as a leader in the research community, engage in collaborative research-related activities with LaMarsh faculty and students, and mobilize diverse community-based knowledge within the Centre. During the fall term, I had the opportunity of taking part in the Dr. Eric Jackman Health Scholars Learning Forum. As a LaMarsh graduate student leader, I was able to help coordinate the event, curate a survey for attendees, and network with several esteemed health scholars.



Katie Disimino

Supervisor: Dr. Rebecca Bassett-Gunter **Department:** Kinesiology **Email:** kdisim@yorku.ca



I am a first year PhD student in the School of Kinesiology and Health Science. Over the past two years during my MSc, I was actively involved with LaMarsh as a trainee and Research Award recipient. I am eager to take on a new leadership role, in which I will support the Centre to grow its reach and promote Community engagement with LaMarsh activities. My research focuses on physical activity promotion for families of children with disabilities. I am interested in undertaking knowledge mobilization initiatives to support the development and dissemination of inclusive, evidence-based physical activity information for parents targeting psychosocial predictors of their behaviour. By translating findings into practice, my work aims to generate community-level impact through enhancing children with disabilities' physical activity engagement, supporting their positive development, and encouraging lifelong health habits.

Articles, Hot Off The Press!

- Bohr, Y., Litwin, L., Hankey, J., McCague, H., Singoorie, C., Lucassen, M., Shepherd, M., & Barnhardt, J. (2022). Evaluating the utility of a psychoeducational serious game in protecting Inuit youth from depression: A SPARX pilot modified randomized control study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research (JMIR Serious Games)*. <https://preprints.jmir.org/preprint/38493/accepted>
- Litwin, L., Hankey, J., Lucassen, M., Shepherd, M., Singoorie, C. & Bohr, Y. (In Press). Reflections on SPARX, a self-administered e-intervention for depression, for Inuit youth in Nunavut. *Journal of Rural Mental Health*.
- Bondi, B. C., Gold, A., Belza, C., Wolinska, J. M., Courtney-Martin, G., So, S., Avitzur, Y., & Wales, P. (2022). Predictors of social-emotional development and adaptive functioning in school-age children with intestinal failure. *Journal of Clinical Psychology in Medical Settings*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10880-022-09919-z>
- Khanlou, N., Khan, A., Kurtz Landy, C., Srivastava, R., McMillan, S., Vandeveld-Coke, S., & Vazquez, L. M. (2023). Nursing care for persons with developmental disabilities: Review of literature on barriers and facilitators faced by nurses to provide care. *Nursing Open*, 10(2), 404-423. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/nop2.1338>
- Khanlou, N., Vazquez, L. M., Khan, A., Oraziotti, B., & Ross, G. (2022). Readers Theatre as an arts-based approach to education: A scoping review on experiences of adult learners and educators. *Nurse Education Today*, 116, 10544. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2022.105440>
- Khanlou, N. (2022). Editorial. Year 2020: How will it impact identities of children and youth over time? *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 20(3), 1834-1836. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-021-00484-4>

- Arbour-Nicitopoulos, K. P., Kuzik, N., Vanderloo, L. M., Latimer-Cheung, A. E., Martin Ginis, K. A., James, M. E., Bassett-Gunter, R. L., Ruttle, D., DaSilva, P., Disimino, K., Cameron, C., Arthur, M., Shikako-Thomas, K., & Latimer-Cheung, A. E. (Accepted). Expert appraisal of the 2022 Canadian Para Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Adolescents With Disabilities. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1123/apaq.2022-0050>
- Prime, H., Wade, M., & Browne, D. (2022). Pandemic-related disruption and positive adaptation: Profiles of family function at the onset of the pandemic. *Adversity and Resilience Science: Journal of Research and Practice*.
- Shoychet, G., Browne, D. T., Wade, M., & Prime, H. (2022). Assessing positive adaptation during a global crisis: The development and validation of the family positive adaptation during COVID-19 scale. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 886504.
- Thomas, A., Bohr, Y., Hankey, J., Oskalns, M., Barnhardt, J., & Singoorie, C. (2022). How did Nunavummiut youth cope during the COVID-19 pandemic? A qualitative exploration of the resilience of Inuit youth leaders involved in the I-SPARX project. *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, 81(1), 2043577. <https://doi.org/10.1080/22423982.2022.2043577>



Presentations

- Thomas, A., Oskalns, M., Garvey, N. & Bohr, Y. (2022, September). How did Nunavummiut youth cope during the COVID-19 pandemic? A qualitative exploration of the resilience of Inuit youth leaders involved in the I-SPARX project. National Summit on Indigenous Mental Wellness. Toronto, ON.

- Bondi, B. C., Tassone, V., Bucsea, O., Desrocher, M., & Pepler, D. J. (2022, August). Meeting the challenge: Systematic review of cross-domain neurodevelopmental assessments in infancy and early childhood. International Society for Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHad) in conjunction with Kids Brain Health Congress (International).
- Khanlou, N., Nunes, F., Vazquez, L. M., Khan, A., & Seto Nielsen, L. (2022, November). Exploring the complexity of narratives in the cultural identity negotiation and integration of Asian- and Latino-Canadian youth. 26th Biennial Canadian Ethnic Studies Association Biennial Conference: Immigration Politics, Refugee Crises, and Ethnic Dynamics in a Changing World Order – Canada and Beyond. Saint Mary's University, Halifax, NS.
- Khanlou, N. (2022, October). Migration, mental health, youth resilience and COVID-19 pandemic. XIII Seminar on Internationalization of Production of Knowledge in Nursing; Multiculturalism: Diversity, equity, and inclusion in the health and nursing care. Anna Nery School of Nursing, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Virtual Event).
- Khanlou, N., Khan, A., Kurtz Landy, C., Srivastava, R., McMillan, S., Vandavelde-Coke, S., & Vazquez, L. M. (2022, October). Health inequities experienced by people with developmental disabilities: Towards a strategic role for nursing care. Canadian Children, Youth and Communities (CCYC) Health In | Equity Digital Conference. Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON.
- Disimino, K., Weiss, J., Tristani, L., Santino, N., & Bassett-Gunter, R. L. (2022). Using framed messages and risk information to motivate physical activity support behaviours among parents of children and youth with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Exercise, Movement, and Sport*, 53(1).
<https://www.scapps.org/jems/index.php/1/article/view/2883>
- Prime, H. (2022, November). Same storm, different boats: Profiles of family disruption at the onset of the pandemic. International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies 38th Annual Meeting. Atlanta, GA.



Awards & Achievements

Congratulations to Dr. Nazilla Khanlou for receiving the following grants.

- Khanlou, N., Davidson, D., Nunes, F., Seto Nielsen, L., Skop, M., Collaborators: Kim, H. S., Santos Silva, L., & Zangeneh, M. (2022-2025). Asian-Canadian youth identities in a pandemic era: Arts-based research. SSHRC Insight Grant.
- Khanlou, N., Davidson, D., Foster, L., Nunes, F., Collaborators: Bingham, R., Gateri, H., Lum, L., Pour Ebrahim Alamdar, N., & VanDeVelde-Coke, S. (2022-2024). Social support for racialized families of youth with developmental disabilities: Intersectionality informed research. SSHRC Insight Development Grant.
- Khanlou, N., Davidson, D., Foster, L., Nunes, F., Collaborators: Bingham, R., Gateri, H., Lum, L., Pour Ebrahim Alamdar, N., VanDeVelde-Coke, S., & Washington, D. (2022-2023). Equity-informed intersectoral KMB to address pandemic health disparities experienced by racialized families with developmental disabilities. SSHRC Exchange – KMB Grant.

Congratulations to Katie Disimino for receiving a Mitacs Accelerate award in partnership with ParticipACTION.

- Disimino, K., Vanderloo, L. M., & Bassett-Gunter, R. L. (2022). ParticipACTION's physical activity promotion standards: Enhancing inclusion and accessibility among equity-deserving groups. Mitacs Accelerate.

Congratulations to Dr. Heather Prime for being awarded the President's New Researcher Award by the Canadian Psychological Association in June 2022. The award recognizes the exceptional quality of the contribution of new researchers to psychological knowledge in Canada.

In the Media

- Women do more ‘worry work’ than men. It’s affecting their mental health and their careers. The Globe and Mail: The Globe’s Women Collective (2022, May). Khanlou, N. interviewed.
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-women-do-more-worry-work-than-men-its-affecting-their-mental-health/>

Partner Stories

In August, the Bohr Lab hosted a research retreat in Iqaluit, NU, with youth leaders and community partners to share results from their concluding 5-year initiative (Making I-SPARX fly in Nunavut) and to introduce their new CIHR-funded projects (Inuit Youth and Families During COVID-19 and Virtual Qaggiq). The team also formed community partnerships with the Municipality of Kinngait’s Department of Recreation, the Government of Nunavut’s Department of Education, and the Kitikmeot Friendship Society in Cambridge Bay.

Announcements

Join the NEW LaMarsh LinkedIn Group

We have recently established a LinkedIn group for the LaMarsh Community. The goal of this group is to provide a platform for LaMarsh members to support one another.

You're invited to actively engage with this virtual community in ways that are most meaningful to you. For example, you can use the LinkedIn group to contribute to discussions, ask questions, share announcements, seek out mentors, schedule meetups, and network with fellow LaMarsh members.

We hope this platform will serve as a helpful tool to foster communication among our Community. This group will evolve based on your contributions and needs, and we welcome your suggestions to improve the service.

[Join the LaMarsh LinkedIn group.](#)

Follow Us On Social Media

Be sure to follow LaMarsh on social media to stay up-to-date with the latest news and events from the Centre. We also encourage you to tag **@LaMarshCentre** in your posts, so that we can re-share your work with our community!

Instagram: [@LaMarshCentre](#)

Twitter: [@LaMarshCentre](#)

LinkedIn: [LaMarsh Centre for Child & Youth Research at York University](#)

Call for Newsletter Content

Would you like to be featured in the next edition of the LaMarsh newsletter? Kindly send content and photos to lamarshmedia@gmail.com by **February 27**. This newsletter is designed to highlight YOUR accomplishments, including:

- Scholarships/grants you've been awarded
- Articles/books you've published
- Conferences you've presented at
- Community partnerships you've developed
- Past events you've hosted
- Upcoming events you're planning to host
- Any other newsletter-worthy materials!

We look forward to continuing to circulate the LaMarsh newsletter each quarter.

Interested In Joining Our Trainee Network?

The LaMarsh Trainee Network is a group of undergraduate students, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows studying in the area of child and youth research from a variety of disciplines at York University. The aim of the Trainee Network is to help students establish meaningful academic relationships with researchers in their field of interest, share research with peers, and give talks at symposium events for learning and development purposes. The Network is also designed to broaden interest and awareness of child and youth research, encourage multi-disciplinary research, and provide a means for skill development.

To get involved, email the LaMarsh Centre for Child & Youth Research lamarsh@yorku.ca

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please email us at lamarsh@yorku.ca with “unsubscribe” in the subject line.

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