

The Community Perspectives Series



Recent community-based research from our enabling grants program

Citizenship Matters - The Alternative Planning Group

... explores the differential impact on immigrant seniors under the regulations of the Canadian Old Age Security (OAS) Program and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). In order to be eligible for maximum funding under this program, a person needs to have lived in Canada for 40 years after the age of 18. Thus, while the legislation was designed from a human rights perspective that decrees that 'no Canadian, including seniors, should live in poverty', in fact, it has created a system where there are 'two classes of Canadians', with entitlements that exclude an immigrant senior population. This report is an important first step in highlighting complex issues, and raises many intriguing questions for future research. The process also revealed an interest among the seniors interviewed to take an active role in policy and advocacy issues that affect their rights.

Not for Lack of Trying -The Ontario Council of Alternative Businesses and Habitat Services

...identifies the specific challenges of unemployment for mental health consumer/survivors living in boarding homes. Focus group interviews conducted by Peer Researchers illuminated challenges to recovery exacerbated by unstable housing conditions. Augmenting on anecdotal evidence or assumptions about barriers to recovery, systematic research illuminated a number of specific and realistic recommendations for improvement.

The report also illustrates the restrictions of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Programs and traditional employment programs as barriers to achieving paid work. The research highlights areas of traditional mental health services that can be strengthened in order to improve conditions of unemployment for consumer survivors.

Let Us Talk About Sex - Portuguese-Speaking Interagency Network

... summarizes the findings of a series of focus groups with 62 Portuguese Speaking Youth from the Toronto area about their knowledge and attitudes about sex. One of the recommendations of the report was to use the results to work with the project "Raising Sexually Healthy Children", recently featured in the Toronto Star. While *Let Us Talk About Sex* specifically surveyed Portuguese speaking youth, we believe that the results can be expanded to gain insight to the challenges of intergenerational dialogue about sex within the realm of specific cultural considerations.

Private Personal Care Homes and the 'Hardest to House': Toronto Christian Resource Centre

The goal of this research was to help understand the experiences of the 'hardest to house' and then develop best practices and standards for private boarding homes. The report found that the overwhelming majority of tenants in private boarding homes were middle aged men. Often, they had experienced a life crisis followed by a period of housing instability, which led them to live in private boarding homes. This report reveals findings contrary to expectations. While 'hard to house' tenants were assumed to have a long history of evictions from non profit housing providers as a result of behavioral challenges, in fact, it was found that their difficulties finding regular housing were also often a result of physical health and mobility. Where it was initially assumed that private personal care homes would be a last resort after non profit housing providers, it was found that participants enjoyed the sense of safety, family and care of the private landlords. The report includes recommendations such as subsidies from funders for meeting certain standards. This report is a welcome addition to our extensive body of work examining housing alternatives for individuals in Toronto.

The Wellesley Institute is Canada's leader in rigorous, community-based research, pragmatic policy solutions, social innovation and community action. We are located in downtown Toronto, but you can visit us any time at www.wellesleyinstitute.com

45 Charles St E, Suite 101, Toronto ON, M4Y 1S2 tel: 416 972 -1010 email: aerin@wellesleyinstitute.com
