SPRC
SOCIAL PLANNING & RESEARCH COUNCIL OF HAMILTON

IMPACT REPORT

2021/2022

www.sprc.hamilton.on.ca

Mission

To promote equity, inform policy and planning decisions and increase community engagement to improve social conditions. We accomplish this through research, policy analysis, community partnerships and program delivery.

Vision

A sustainable Hamilton community that is caring, inclusive, empowering and accessible to all.

Values

SPRC is guided by the following values:

Inclusion

We value diversity and respect the equal rights of people of all backgrounds. We listen to and honour the voices of lived experience in all our work. We create opportunities for community involvement.

Integrity

We uphold high standards in our work and activities, adhering to evidence-based practices and transparency.

Innovation

We commit to continuous learning. We stay attuned to emerging social issues and are innovative in the way we conduct our work, the ways we collaborate with others and how we communicate information to advocate for social change.

Board Members

Cairine Wilson*
Dave Nanderam
Dom Cocco
Gopal Banerjee
Jilda Perez*
Kamran Raza
Minda Richardson
Pat Wright
Saman Al-Rawee*
Susanne O'Grady*
Tammy Hwang
Tran Nguyen
Zac Spicer

Staff

Alana Westervelt
Alison Miller*
Betsy Rouw
Bhairavi Kumar
Breanne Le Maitre
Caroline Eyk
Deirdre Pike
Ghanwa Afach
Janae Court
Jona Ombao- Appadu
Kim Martin
Matt Thompson
Mary Long
(on secondment from UWHH)
Natalie Irwin
Sana Sabir
Sara Mayo
*Resigned during the year

Canada Summer Jobs Placements

Brittany Georgeson
Hina Rani
Olivia Watkin-McClurg

Placement Students

Madeline Chow
Megan Blair
Rachel Ferry

President and Executive Director Message

As we look back on the past year, the effects of COVID-19 have continued to play a significant role in the lives of our community and around the world. The global health pandemic has forever changed the way we work, both in terms of how we collaborate with community partners and how we provide direct service to community members.

Given the impact of COVID-19, particularly on those most marginalized, we know that the combination of equitable economic, health and social policies that address systemic inequalities are needed now more than ever before.

This year was the perfect time for us at SPRC to focus our attention forward to a new strategic plan. We asked our Board, staff, community partners, funders and stakeholders how best we can meet the needs of the community in the years to come. Many of our stakeholders told us they value how SPRC has continued to advance social justice issues, our social research and analysis, our solutions-based service programs, and our deep roots in community development.

The provision of affordable housing for everyone has been fundamental to our concept of justice and equity. While housing insecurity and homelessness have been longstanding issues, this past year brought a renewed focus to those "living rough" in public settings and fostered creative solutions to provide shelter. This year SPRC partnered with the Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters (HATS) to help achieve safe, short-term shelter designed to support those for whom traditional shelter systems do not meet their needs.

As you will see in this report, the Tastebuds' Student Nutrition Program served over 1.5 million snacks and meals during this fiscal year, ensuring both youth attending school in person as well as those learning remotely, had access to healthy food during the school year as well as in the summer months. Research reports this year further explored equity issues related to the pandemic including the impact on housing and equitable vaccine distribution.

All of our programs continued to address needs of Hamiltonians by offering a flexible approach to service and connection through virtual services. We congratulate our team members who developed innovative solutions to increase our impact over this past year. There is still much to be done to create sustainable change and an equitable recovery for residents of Hamilton and beyond. We remain steadfast in our commitment to move the needle to ensure a community where all members are included and no one is left behind.

Dom Cocco
President

Kim Martin
Executive Director

Our collective impact in 2021/2022

1,515,316
meals and snacks served through the Hamilton Tastebuds Student Nutrition Collaborative

8,628
families supported through Hamilton Tastebuds' Buddy Box

967
individuals participated in Financial Counselling and Education

$5,035,670.11
in tax refunds and benefits received by Hamiltonians living on a low income through the Financial Empowerment (Hamilton Tax Helps) Program

3 community Townhall sessions on relevant social issues

5 community research reports

"Thank you for working on bringing dignity and security to people's lives!"

As a senior citizen on low income I the appreciate the tax help and senior scams workshops we are getting from SPRC.You are doing a great job for vulnerable citizens.

Healthy Development of Children and Youth

Hamilton Tastebuds Student Nutrition Collaborative

Hamilton Tastebuds Student Nutrition Programs operated throughout the school year. With one short disruption due to school closures, we were able to steadily work towards pre-pandemic levels of operation. Despite challenges due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, such as increased food costs due to serving pre-packaged foods, and limits on fundraising and volunteer presence in schools, 102 locations across Hamilton were able to operate this year. Due to the hard work and dedication of program volunteers and school staff, a total of 1,515,316 meals and snacks were served between April 2021 and March 2022.

In response to school closures in January 2022, Hamilton Tastebuds renewed our Buddy Box initiative, which ran until the end of March 2022. Nutritious food was made available to students and theirfamilies who were adversely impacted by the pandemic, through 10 partnering food banks/food service organizations. A total of 8,628 families and 15,808 students were supported through this initiative.

Hamilton Tastebuds Student Nutrition Collaborative is a collaborative between Social Planning Council of Hamilton, Hamilton Public Health, Hamilton Catholic District School Board and Hamilton Wentworth District School Board Program is funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and administered through Haldimand Norfolk REACH.

Community Action Program for Children (CAPC)

The Hamilton Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) is a service system continuum for families with young children in East Hamilton. CAPC programs are funded throughout Canada through the Public Health Agency of Canada to promote the healthy development of children from birth to age six. Service partners provide much needed supports to families including early literacy programs, support for young parents, hands on nutritional workshops, and system navigation support.

Housing and Homelessness

The Women's Housing Planning Collaborative - (WHPC)

The WHPC continued to draw attention to the needs of women, trans, and non-binary people in Hamilton. One way they did that was by organizing the 4th annual Homeless No More Memorial for people who have died from homelessness, at St. Patrick's Church on November 26, covered by CHCH News. With the Point in Time count identifying women make up more than half of the city's unhoused population, WHPC will continue to work on system planning to respond to this reality.

Street Youth Housing Collaborative - (SYHC)

SPRC has continued to provide systems planning and backbone support to the Street Youth Planning Collaborative as they continue work towards to ensuring there is a continuum of services for youth who are at-risk or experiencing homelessness during this time.

Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters - (HATS)

A chronic lack of affordable and subsidized housing in Hamilton has resulted in increased public encampments and housing insecurity. In many cases, individuals living rough in community are faced with constant threat of being removed from public spaces only to move elsewhere and be displaced again and again. In an effort to provide a temporary, more compassionate solution a group of concerned community members and partners founded HATS- Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters.

The purpose of this new local initiative is to add a step to the housing continuum by providing small cabins for people currently living rough in Hamilton.

SPRC joined these efforts and currently serves as the flow through agency for all HATS donations. Although HATS was hoping to have housed people through this past winter, and with enough funds and pledges to build 10 cabins, there is still no place to put them. The City is working with the steering committee to find an accessible location.

Poverty Reduction and Elimination

Financial Empowerment Program

$5,035,670.11
in government tax benefits for Hamiltonians living on a low income.

3812
income tax filings submitted

46
community partners

Hamilton Tax Help was created in order to provide financial empowerment support and programming to city residents living on a low income. Financial empowerment consists of:

- Assisting people with tax filing and problem-solving in order to maintain and access government benefits.
- Providing outreach and education, including programming targeting older adults and newcomers. This includes workshops, distribution of educational materials and one-on-one problem solving.
- Working with social services, health providers and housing providers in order to maintain access to Rent-Geared-To- Income Housing due to changes to the Housing Services Act The closure of CVIPT clinics as well as the move to digital service delivery has left a number of older adults and newcomers behind in terms of being able to access essential tax filing and information services.

Calculating a Living Wage

SPRC, the Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty Reduction and Ontario Living Wage Network calculated the 2021 Living Wage calculation for Hamilton at $17.20/hour. A living wage is a calculation that estimates the renumeration an individual requires in a specific location to meaningfully participate in society and have a decent standard of living for the individual and their family. Included in a living wage calculation are items such as food, housing, education transportation, healthcare costs, clothing and social expenses. Calculations take into account a weighted average between a single person, a family of four, and a lone parent with one child. In November 2021, the Canada inflation rate was 4.7% and at the end of our fiscal year in March 2022, inflation has risen to 6.7%. This would suggest this figure is already outdated.

Equity and Inclusion

Our 2021/2022 Publications

Following up on our August 2020 COVID-19 bulletins, the SPRC released more bulletins in 2021 examining the impacts in Hamilton of COVID-19 on inequality, children, employment, and housing. A final bulletin summarized the province's equitable vaccination strategy, and shed light on why initial progress was slower in key target demographics.

COVID-19 and Intensification of Inequalities	Neighbourhoods with high proportions of racialized residents, high proportions of residents facing material deprivation were among the neighbourhoods with the highest rates of COVID-19 infections. Residents who identify as Arab/Middle Eastern, or West Asian, Black, and East or Southeast Asian were disproportionately affected by COVID-19 in Hamilton. Public Health Agency of Canada's Intensifications of Inequalities model helps understand COVID-19's unequal impacts across our city and beyond.
Children and COVID-19 in Hamilton	COVID-19 infection rates were very high in neighbourhoods with high proportion of children 0-17 and neighbourhoods with high rates of child poverty. Severe mental health distress among some children led to increased rates of hospitalization since the pandemic. Rates of COVID-19 infections among school children were leading the provincial average in this third wave of Ontario's COVID-19 infection.
Occupational and Employment Impacts of COVID-19	Average COVID-19 infection rates were highest in neighbourhoods with high proportions of workers in healthcare and sales and service occupations and lowest in neighbourhoods with high proportions of management and natural resources workers. The economic impact of COVID-19 included about 20,000 fewer people employed in Hamilton a year after the pandemic started
Housing, Homelessness, and the Health Pandemic	Neighbourhoods with high proportions of residents living in rental housing had high rates of COVID-19. The rental housing market is under stress for a variety of reasons including some landlords using tactics to increase rents and/or evict tenants during the pandemic. People experiencing housing instability and homelessness endured even more isolation and stress during the pandemic.
Equitable Vaccinations in Hamilton	Ontario's Vaccination strategy includes Equity as a key pillar, and groups facing disproportionate risk are to be prioritized, to help reduce the magnification of inequalities that COVID-19 has created. Progress on vaccinations was slower for many priority populations. Increasing accessibility and trust to ensure all residents of our community get vaccinated are keys to ensuring equitable vaccination distribution.

Our Community Connections

In addition to our community programs and research, SPRC works closely with a variety of community organizations, supporting them by facilitating research, program evaluation, GIS data and mapping services and strategic facilitation. These service contracts help support the ongoing work of the SPRC. Over this past year we have provided services to the following organizations:

Catholic Children's Aid Society - (CCAS)

SPRC supports CCAS with data support through participation on its Quality Assurance and Risk Management Committee and provides expertise when required for data projects.

City of Hamilton – Re-Imagining Public Engagement

This work involved focus groups and interviews with over 40 Hamilton residents from equity-seeking and traditionally underrepresented community groups, in order to better understand current perceptions, experiences, issues, and barriers regarding City-led public engagement efforts. This was part of a larger initiative of City of Hamilton to improve engagement practices. A final report will be presented at City Council in June 2022.

Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leaders - (CHIL)

The SPRC continues to assist CHIL with a priority setting and planning project. This included an in-person session in October 2021, with the members of CHIL participating in a focus group and priority setting exercise.

Empowerment Squared

SPRC was invited to work with Empowerment Squared on their School Readiness Academy project which takes a systems level approach to examine the policies and supports that are currently in place for Black, racialized students and how they could be improved to reduce disparities in school achievement. SPRC conducted an in-depth literature review, and facilitated qualitative focus groups, and key informant interviews with a variety of community stakeholders. This information will be utilized to help shape the direction and program elements of the School Readiness Academy.

The AIDS Network - (TAN)

An evaluation of TAN's work with PLWH (People Living With HIV), service providers, and GBMSM, (Gay, Bi, Men who have Sex with Men) was completed through public surveys and analysis. This report was presented to the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Today's Family

An Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion assessment of Today's Family was completed, which included a survey of over 120 licensed child care providers. This resulted in a report with recommendations to help strengthen EDI efforts.

Wesley

SPRC worked with Welsey on a pilot project to re-design their existing client feedback methods in order to garner more input from individuals who access their programs. Through a series of surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews, SPRC engaged with individuals who access three core programs of Wesley and compiled the results with recommendation for improvement, as well as findings around best practices for collecting client feedback. A second phase of this work is scheduled for fall 2022.

SPRC/CDH Townhalls

Along with its sibling organization, Community Development Halton (CDH), the SPRC hosted 3 virtual Townhalls on social issues most impacting our communities – affordable housing, the federal election and food security. These were attended by over 175 people.

Financials

Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton

Statement of Operations

Year ended March 31, 2022, with comparative information for 2021

	2022	2021
Revenues		
Public and other organizational support	$ 2,565,898	$ 1,164,937
Federal government funding	533,355	519,059
United Way Halton & Hamilton	232,838	108,626
City of Hamilton	59,435	50,857
Provincial government funding	15,943	231,914
Fundraising	8,833	5,409
Other	5,153	9,339
Interest	4,256	2,778
Membership fees	1,109	1,082
	3,426,820	2,094,001
Expenses		
Service contracts	2,488,750	1,131,965
Salaries and benefits	808,033	852,051
Rent and insurance	63,894	73,506
Supplies	43,742	23,939
Equipment and maintenance contracts	42,996	14,699
Professional fees	32,656	17,252
Telephone	23,182	17,708
Public relations	12,826	956
Volunteer recognition	10,907	3,719
Organization dues and periodicals	7,052	3,883
Other administration	6,868	6,503
Staff development	2,331	2,225
Postage and shipping	3,471	4,035
Amortization	1,858	1,929
Staff transportation	1,847	895
	3,550,413	2,155,265
Deficiency of revenues over expenses before the undernoted	(123,593)	(61,264)
Other income (expense)		
Government assistance	121,196	365,346
Forgivable portion of Canada Emergency Business Account loan	-	20,000
Repaid funding	(80,417)	-
	40,779	385,346
(Deficiency) excess of revenues over expenses for the year	$ (82,814)	$ 324,082

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the support from our funders for their continued support of the work of the council.

Hamilton

City Enrichment Fund

United Way
Halton & Hamilton

In addition, we thank our program and project funders and community donors.

. Breakfast Club of Canada
. Catholic Children's Aid Society
. Citizen Action Group
. Community Support Services Network
. Egg Farmers of Canada
. Egg Farmers of Ontario
. Employment and Social Development Canada
. Empowerment Squared
. First Ontario
. Good Shepherd Centres
. Grocery Foundation
. Haldimand-Norfolk REACH
. Hamilton Aids Network
. Hamilton Catholic Children's Aid Society
. Hamilton Community Foundation
. Hamilton Council on Aging
. Home Depot Canada Foundation
. Kiwanis Club of Hamilton
. Kiwanis Club of Hamilton East
. Law Foundation of Ontario
. Mazon Canada
. Ministry of Children Community and Social Services
. Public Health Agency of Canada

SPRC
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To help support the work of the Social Planning and Research Council, please consider making a donation via Canada Helps :
https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/social-planning-and-research-council-of-hamilton-wentworth/

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