

Hamilton Pathways to Education FACT SHEET

What is Pathways to Education?

The Pathways to Education Program is a proven effective model, first created and implemented in 2001 in Regent Park by the Regent Park Community Health Centre. It was created to reduce poverty and its effects by lowering the high school dropout rate and increasing access to post-secondary education among youth in Canada.

The program has now been replicated through North Hamilton Community Health Centre (NHCHC) serving the Health Centre's catchment area - namely, the **Bennetto and Keith neighbourhoods**. Hamilton Pathways was launched in September 2009 with the first group of students entering grade nine. These students are being supported throughout high school, and each new grade nine group will be invited to join Pathways. At present we are preparing for Grades 9 to 12 for September 2014.

How does Pathways to Education work?

The Pathways to Education Program provides four key supports to ensure that young people will successfully complete high school, continue on to post-secondary programs, and become actively engaged in their career development.

The four supports are:

Academic - A Tutoring program for youth to work with volunteer Academic Mentors twice a week.

Social - Group Mentoring for grades 9 and 10, Community and Career mentoring for grades 11 and 12 help young people develop life skills, build relationships, share new experiences and have fun!

Financial - Immediate financial support such as free bus tickets or lunch vouchers tied to attendance and a scholarship for post-secondary education.

Advocacy – Student Parent Support Workers help connect teens, parents, school administration, teachers and community agencies.

The program takes a holistic approach, ensuring that the four supports are delivered in a cross-communicative style and not in isolation.

Who is involved in Hamilton Pathways to Education?

Under the guidance of Pathways to Education Canada, North Hamilton Community Health Centre coordinates the delivery of this program. Crucial to the success of the program is collaboration with the community, including: students, parents, teachers and schools, volunteer mentors, community groups and businesses, and other stakeholders. A continuous process of feedback and growth is necessary for the program to be as effective as it deserves to be.

When will Hamilton Pathways to Education take place?

From March to September each year, NHCHC staff will conduct information and registration events for current grade eight students living in the Bennetto and the Keith neighbourhoods, and moving to grade nine (for September). This will take place in each elementary school in the area with eligible students from both Hamilton-Wentworth School Boards.

Hamilton Pathways runs from September through to June, each year.

Where does Hamilton Pathways to Education take place?

Tutoring/Mentoring sessions for students take place four nights per week at local community spaces that are easily accessible to participating youth. These include North Hamilton Community Health Centre and Eva Rothwell Resource Centre. Sites will be confirmed yearly upon feedback from participants.

Who provides the Tutoring/Mentoring for student participants?

Tutors/Mentors for Hamilton Pathways are a diverse group of volunteers from all across the Hamilton region. Volunteers complete an application process with NHCHC and training to prepare them for success in the program. Volunteers are supervised and supported by staff at NHCHC. Pathways has a terrific team of approximately 80 adults volunteers making tutoring and mentoring happen!

How is Hamilton Pathways to Education funded?

The NHCHC has worked closely with Pathways Canada in order to secure grants available from Pathways Canada. Funding is provided on a year-to-year basis, and because Pathways Canada is a not-for-profit organization there is no guarantee of future funding. The NHCHC staff is working hard to secure additional funds to augment and enrich the program experience.

There is no cost for students and families participating in Hamilton Pathways to Education.

What is the future of Hamilton Pathways to Education?

Provided that future funding can be secured and that the program gains the needed support from the community, every year's new group of Grade 9 youth will have a Pathways program throughout their high school careers (Grades 10, 11 & 12+). They will be supported and encouraged through the completion of high school and beyond!

When young people graduate, we all benefit. The Pathways to Education Program has proven to be less expensive and more cost-effective than most other programs available to youth. Ultimately, this translates into enormous savings in health care, correctional and social service expenditures.

How can you help?

- Volunteer in our program.
- Connect us to businesses, groups, and organizations to recruit volunteers or partner with us.
- Donate/raise funds for supplies, snacks, and to ensure the program continues in future years.
- Donate space or a unique Mentoring experience to engage students in new ways to learn.

For more information about Hamilton Pathways to Education or to register, contact:

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