



## Across Boundaries' Quarterly Newsletter

(Fall Issue, 2011)

### SUBMISSION FOR THE REVIEW OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN ONTARIO

A session with clients was devoted in discussing their experience with the current Social Assistance Program, the Ontario Works as well as ODSP. Clients were able to make their voices heard in a session held by Parkdale Legal Clinic to get input on the Social Assistance Review. Some of the themes emerging from this session included poverty, dependency, ongoing mental and physical health challenges, lack of opportunity for growth and personal development and stigma. Clients felt that there is a need to raise awareness of how disempowering these programs are because their punitive rules do not aid recovery or improve the quality of their lives.

Many issues of concern were expressed some of which were the very negative experience which greatly affect their mental health. All these concerns were noted which will then be included in our submission to the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario.

Across Boundaries also participated in the consultation held at 519 Church which was organized by OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies serving South Asians) and Colour of Poverty: Colour of Change Network. The workshop held at Across Boundaries by the ODSP Action Coalition and Parkdale Legal Clinic will also inform these submissions. A collaborative submission between ERDCO (Ethno-Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario), HEC (Health Equity Council) and Across Boundaries is being developed to highlight the issues raised about mental health and disability in racialized communities.

### THE TREE CONCERT

The concert was a great success which showcased the talents of the participants in the Across Boundaries Music Program. The event was organized to raise awareness in the community about issues of mental health, the importance of art in healing and the Holistic Model of Mental Health Care at Across Boundaries. It featured musical performances by members of the Program as well as local guest artists. A short video clip illustrating the work of the Program has been produced and was released on website: [www.thetreemusic.ca](http://www.thetreemusic.ca) as a promotion of the concert.

"The Tree", a CD production of the group was available at the concert for a small donation of \$10. Local artists such as Maylee Todd, Ian Kamau, Saida Baba

Talibah and her band all participated which made the concert an evening of great art and music. The concert was held at 99 Sudbury (South of Queen St. West, corner of Lisgar St. and Sudbury St.), a beautiful and spacious art space in Toronto.



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## KNOWLEDGE CAFÉ

On September 22<sup>nd</sup> the first Knowledge Cafe' was held at Across Boundaries, and it was a great success. "Spirits of a Drum Beat: African Caribbean Traditional Healers and Their Healing Practices in Toronto" was the topic, and we had a presentation on a research project that was in the August 2011 issue of the International Journal of Health Promotion and Education. The research explores and offers insights into African Caribbean traditional healers and their healing practices and the collaboration between Western healthcare practitioners and themselves. There were many traditional healers who came and participated actively in the discussion. There was an in depth discussion on this topic at the end, and individuals felt it was great to have a place where they can speak about the need for and the challenges in offering traditional healings practices. A concrete result came out where a network of healers was created using Across Boundaries as the hub for meetings and events that will be organized in the future.

## KNOWLEDGE CAFÉ

"Spirits of a Drum Beat:  
African Caribbean Traditional Healers  
and their Healing Practices in Toronto"

*This article appeared in the August 2011 issue of the International Journal of Health Promotion and Education. The research explores and offers insights into African Caribbean traditional healers and their healing practices and their collaboration between Western healthcare practitioners and themselves.*

**Roy Moodley & Michel'e Bertrand**

*Authors and lead researchers of the project*

Academics, researchers, policy-makers, service providers, frontline/community workers, artists and healers are invited to participate in the discussion with the guest speakers over coffee.



**Thurs, Sept. 22, 2011**

**6:00-8:00 pm**

**Across Boundaries**

**51 Clarkson Ave, Toronto**

(3 blocks north of Eglinton Ave. W, on Caledonia)

RSVP Martha Ocampo (416)787-3007 ext 224;  
E:mail: martha@acrossboundaries.ca



## AT HOME PROJECT UPDATE

Our team has been busy identifying and placing the last of our un-housed participants into permanent accommodation. Ninety two out of ninety eight clients have been housed and the project emphasis is now on identifying and addressing participants' long term goals. We are initiating 'What's Next?', a peer support group for Across Boundaries' At Home/ Chez Soi participants to provide a space for them to voice their concerns, socialize, share their ideas and work together to address their goals.

We've also launched our Employment Support Program to assist participants link up with meaningful learning, training, volunteer and employment opportunities.

In order to share the At Home/Chez Soi initiative with a wider audience, the National Film Board of Canada is producing a number of short documentaries along with a longer 52 minute broadcast length documentary looking at different facets of the At Home / Chez Soi project. The first set of shorts will be ready by February 2012 and accessible from the NFB's website.

## AR/AO TRAINING EVALUATION RESULTS

One key component of Across Boundaries' AR/AO framework is education and training. Over the last few years, the centre focused in using its resources developing appropriate programs and services and a holistic model of care to serve the needs of people from racialized communities that are experiencing mental health distress.

In 2009 the education and training program was launched. After a year of operation, the evaluation results of all the training workshops that were held internally and externally in the GTA including those that were held in Saskatchewan were analyzed. The results show high scores in achieving the goals and objectives both from the participants and the workshop perspectives. Evaluation results are available on request.



**MORE THAN A LABEL, MORE THAN YOU CAN SEE**  
**(www.morethanalabel.acrossboundaries.ca)**

Across Boundaries, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and a partnership of community organizations were funded by Public Health Agency Canada (PHAC) to build tools for education on mental health for immigrant, refugee and racialized youth in Toronto. One of the result of this project is the creation of a website which was successfully launched on Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in the Chamber Lounge at the Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. West. “Investing in our future-building mental capital” was the theme of the keynote speaker, Dr. Kwame McKenzie, a Senior Scientist, Social Equity and Health Research at CAMH. More Than a Label, More Than You Can See is a great resource for anyone especially youth and educators that are looking for appropriate service in mental health or addiction and a great way to start some difficult conversation with our youth on mental health.

**AB HIRES NEW PROGRAM MANAGER FOR AT HOME/CHEZ SOI PROJECT**

Jaipreet Kohli has been hired as the new Program Manager at Across Boundaries this summer. With his previous role as a case manager in the Mental Health and Justice Initiative at Across Boundaries between 2007 and 2009, he is no stranger to the organization. Jaipreet comes to us with a wealth of overseas experience which has allowed him to utilize his education in international development with various health-related non-governmental organizations. In his new position he will also be able to leverage the knowledge and skills he gained as a Court Support Worker with Community Resources Connections as well as a Crisis Support Worker with Gerstein Centre. We welcome Jaipreet back to Across Boundaries and wish him success in his new role.



Two new staff were also hired as part of the At Home/Chez Soi project: Chris Sidoru a Mental Health nurse and Peter Ackie, an Employment Counsellor.

**2010-2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Across Boundaries celebrated its 16<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 17<sup>th</sup> at 51 Clarkson Ave. The keynote speaker was Haroon Siddiqui, a regular Toronto Star columnist and the Star’s “[editor emeritus](#)” who is known for his critical analysis of local and foreign affairs.

Mr. Siddiqui emphasised that Multiculturalism was entrenched in the constitution of Canada unlike its US and European counterparts. This suggests that no Canadian party could succeed on an anti-immigration platform, they may claim to be against the policy of multiculturalism but there is no likelihood of constitutional change.

Siddiqui urged community organizations to battle for better policies and to engage media to hold “politician’s feet to fire”. He further added that we need to raise our standards for whom we support and not get carried away by supporting politicians who are making policies against our communities. Government is starving us of funds and undermining our vulnerable and marginalized communities.

Mr. Siddiqui also critiqued the Conservative notion of a single Canadian identity. He emphasised that We don’t have any single identity and we need not be defensive about being black nor should one make an issue of skin color as in the case of President Obama.

The presentation was followed by a lively question and answer period. Program attendees were also treated to an evening full of drumming and music presentations by the participants of the Music Program not to mention the great food served.

## SUMMER EVENTS

### LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Nine participants attended Leadership training workshops which included the following topics: Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Training, Self Esteem, Self Care, Time Management, Assertive Communication, Consumer/Survivor Rights and Relaxation Techniques. Certificates were handed out to clients who attended all the sessions. The training will help clients feel more empowered and become advocates for themselves.

### ASIAN HERITAGE CELEBRATIONS



This is an annual program at Across Boundaries and this year's was filled with lots of fun and learning both by the staff and the participants of the programs. We featured snapshots of Asia in different forms, ethnic food, a

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Lion Dance performance, video presentations by Bhangra Empire and the Edmonton Garba Girls, a video postcard from South East Asia and music by the Across Boundaries Drummers. Dancing and Asian Trivia added to the fun of this event!

### BERT ROBINSON PARK AND COBOURG OUTINGS



On August 16, we took a coach trip to the town of Cobourg. We did some sightseeing and enjoyed the day at the beach. Staff and clients spent the day outdoors, playing games, music and having a fun, relaxing time in the park. A good time was had by all.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over the summer, Across Boundaries had several meetings with a number of groups and individuals in various communities namely: Afghan, Somali, Ghanaian, Tamil, Filipino and Eritrean communities. Each community is in a different stage of a network formation. For example, the Afghan community has now planned an educational event organized by the newly formed network of Afghan community workers while the Somali and Ghanaian communities are forming a network of community leaders. Most of the groups have already developed a draft Terms of Reference.



### “LET’S DISCUSS” PROGRAM



These regular monthly discussions explore gender, race and social issues and help to educate, raise awareness and empower our clients.

### MOBILE CLINIC FOR WOMEN

This twice a year event focuses on screening and education on female cancers and Sexual Transmitted Infections. We had 25 number of women participating in this event.



## AFFIRMATION AND STRESS MANAGEMENT SESSION



*Staff with their Lotus Dance*

Self-care is very much emphasized as part of maintaining and achieving good mental health and well-being. This session was provided for staff: to learn how to transform negative habit patterns to positive practice; awaken the body through varied forms of spiritual exercises such as the Lotus dance for a healthy lifestyle and a more meaningful life.



*Sister Esper*

### A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION—BILL C-297

On September 29, 2011, a bill was introduced in Parliament that would create a national strategy for suicide prevention. The bill received approval of all parties in Parliament and support of many organizations across the country as well as municipalities and individuals.

Close to 4,000 Canadians die by suicide each year which amounts to 10 people per day. A national strategy is needed to address the higher risks of suicide faced by queer youth, Canada's elderly, teens and young adults, First Nations, Inuit, and individuals from racialized communities.

#### **The CASP Blueprint: A Canadian National Suicide Prevention Strategy Released in 2005**

*The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP) Blueprint* was prepared by its members with assistance from other organizations and individuals. Many countries have developed national strategies to reduce suicide, often with the expertise and leadership of Canadian experts. Yet, Canada was slow in moving forward on this most pressing of public health issues.

As a national organization, CASP concluded that Canadians had waited long enough. If the federal, provincial and territorial governments could not work together to create a national strategy, they felt it was their duty as members of their own communities to take up the challenge. Thousands of hours of work later, the CASP Blueprint was released to all levels of government and to all Canadians.

Members of CASP developed the Blueprint to reduce suicide and its impact in the country: to end the silence; to ease the suffering; to heal communities and its neighbours, as they have healed themselves. They are survivors of loss. Among them, they have lost children, parents, family member, neighbours, friends, patients. They want to end the silence and prevent others from experiencing such loss. ([www.casp-acps.ca](http://www.casp-acps.ca))

Developing a national suicide prevention strategy will need the cooperation of all levels of government including those communities facing systemic barriers. An intersectional analysis and approach is needed to understand that race and racism are social determinants of health disparities in Canada.

“The strategy should be a creative, coherent and truly national approach that is comprehensive, evidence-based, specific and subject to evaluation. Suicide can be understood, predicted and controlled. It is not inevitable. We can do much to prevent it. But prevention is not the exclusive responsibility of researchers or health providers or survivors. We need to work together to break the silence”, Dr. Antoon A. Leenaars.

***Cultural Competency, Diversity, Anti-Racism/Anti-  
Oppression In Mental Health/Substance Use***

**Two-Day Training Workshop**

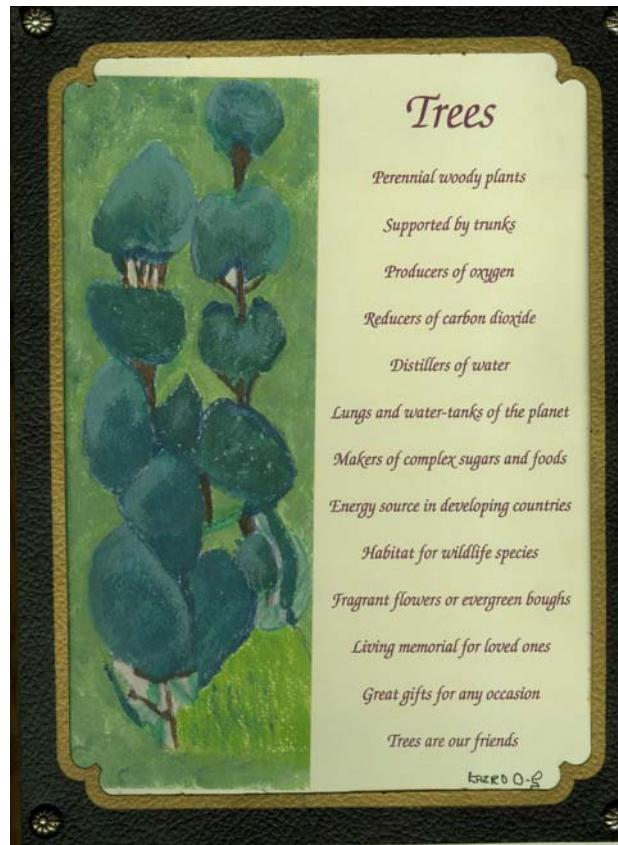
Participants will gain practical knowledge of best practices of a holistic client-centred approach to care within an anti-racism/anti-oppression framework. The workshop will be very interactive and participatory using creative activities which starts at 9:00 am to 4:30 pm.

- **Tuesday, January 17th and 24th 2012**
- **Tuesday, March 13th and 20th, 2012**

Place: Across Boundaries  
51 Clarkson Ave., Toronto, M6E 2T5

Please send completed registration form and pre-screening questionnaire to : [genoveva@acrossboundaries.ca](mailto:genoveva@acrossboundaries.ca)

Contact: Martha Ocampo at 416 787-3007 ext. 224;  
[martha@acrossboundaries.ca](mailto:martha@acrossboundaries.ca)



*Art Work and Poem by Kazro OG*

**CLIENT'S CORNER:**

**RECIPES**

**SWEET POTATO BISCUITS**

This is a recipe that I made myself for sweet potato biscuits. They are very good with fried or baked chicken. The sweet potato mash mix can also be served as is but use more sweet potatoes to reduce the spice flavour.

**Ingredients:**

- Sweet Potato Mash
- 4 med sweet Pot. Sliced
- 2 cups milk or enough to just cover pot
- cinnamon ground 2 tsp
- cumin ground 2 tsp
- allspice ground 1 tsp
- cardamom ground 1 tsp
- cloves ground 1/2 tsp
- chilli ground 2 tsp.

Add the spices to the milk before the potatoes, cover the pot and let come to boil then reduce heat to just simmer.

When potatoes are cooked through, about 20 - 25 min, turn off heat and puree in a suitable blender.

**BISCUITS**

**Ingredients:**

- All Purpose Flour 10 cups
- brown sugar 10 tsp
- baking powder 12 tsp
- baking soda 2 1/2 tsp
- salt 3 tsp
- Sugar 2 tsp
- olive oil 5 tbsp.
- butter 1/4 lb
- sweet potato puree 3 cups
- milk 2 cups.

Put all dry ingredients in one bowl, add all wet in the other and incorporate the sweet potato mash with the wet, then mix well with all the dry ingredients.

Let sit for 10 - 15 mins. portion into oiled muffin tins and bake in preheated oven at 350 degrees °F for 20 - 30 mins or until done. Rotate baking biscuit half way through the baking time.

Enjoy.

*By: Joseph.*