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ANC — MOUNT DENNIS

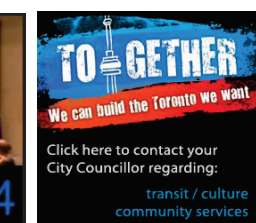
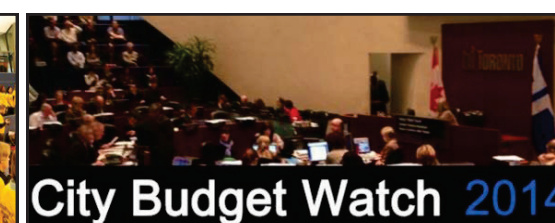
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ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014



Since 1957, Social Planning Toronto has promoted equitable, effective, and inclusive policies to improve life for all residents of Toronto. SPT does research, policy analysis, community planning, and capacity building. We work with agencies across Toronto's community service sector.

OUR PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Community Capacity Building

We increase skills, knowledge, and resource development in local communities through our planners, researchers, and communications staff.

Social Research and Policy Analysis

Our research focuses on three key areas:

- Income Security and Labour Markets
- Public Education and Human Development
- Community Infrastructure, Public Finance and Resource Allocation

We provide communities and organizations with the facts they need to make positive change.

Community Education and Advocacy

We provide opportunities for city-wide education, and support local educational activities, particularly for the most marginalized and vulnerable communities. Making information accessible helps create a foundation of understanding on which communities can act for positive social change.

Building Partnerships

SPT uses its community planning, research, and communications capacities to support responses to critical challenges facing Toronto residents.

OUR MISSION

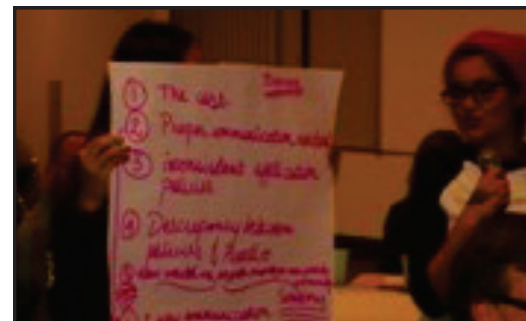
"Social Planning Toronto is committed to building a civic society: one in which diversity, equity, social and economic justice, interdependence and active civic participation are central to all aspects of our lives - in our families, neighbourhoods, voluntary and recreational activities, and in our politics."

OUR ROLE

Social Planning Toronto is a

- **Convenor** of social research, often with other non-profit and academic organizations, and a convenor of collaboration with service providers and residents in local communities.
- **Mobilizer** of community leaders, residents, and organizations to improve equity, inclusivity, and the quality of life in the city.
- **Advocate** with policy makers, agencies, and institutional leaders for improved facilities, social and economic conditions, access to jobs, and services.
- **Resource** for community-based action in support of community-identified issues and priorities through research, policy analysis, public education, and leadership development.

Social Planning Toronto—Linking Research with Community Action



SPT BOARD MEMBERS

Jan Armstrong — Member at Large, Executive Committee
 Brigitte Bardeau
 Karen Bell — Chair, Governance Committee
 Mikhael Bornstein
 Michael Creek — Vice-President
 Joe Cressy
 Miriam DiGiuseppe — President
 Jasmine Earle— Chair, Access and Equity Committee
 Brian Eng
 Charles Finlay—Member at Large, Executive Committee
 Alix Freiler—Chair, Research Advisory Committee
 Nancy Henderson — Secretary
 O'Neil Edwards
 Anshula Ohri — Treasurer and Chair, Finance Committee
 Ginelle Skeritt

SPT STAFF

Israt Ahmed, Community Planner
 John Campey, Executive Director
 Richard DeGaetano, Community Planner
 Cutty Duncan, Project Co-ordinator, ANC – Mt. Dennis
 Layla Farah, Research and Policy Assistant
 Yvonne Forrest, Community Program Assistant
 Yasmin Haq, Community Planner
 Mohamed Ismail, Financial Manager
 Lesley Johnston, Researcher
 Sarah Matsushita, Communications Officer
 Mary Micallef, Program Support
 Araf Mohamed, Research and Policy Assistant
 Sharma Queiser, Program Assistant
 Maria Serrano, Director of Operations
 Navjeet Sidhu, Researcher
 Besrat Solomon, Bookkeeper
 Ryan Tilley, Program Support (Membership)
 Beth Wilson, Senior Researcher

SPT FUNDERS

United Way Toronto
 City of Toronto
 Ontario Trillium Foundation
 Atkinson Charitable Foundation
 Toronto Community Foundation
 Service Canada
 Citizenship and Immigration Canada
 Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

VOLUNTEERS

Nessa Bably
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 Alina Chatterjee
 David Cross
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 Rick Eagan
 Bryan Evans
 Elizabeth Forestell
 Tam Goossen
 Jefferson Guzman
 Scott Leon
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 Vani Visva
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 Imogen Mercer
 Deborah Quiggin
 Erin Shaw
 Kelly Stephenson
 Anthony Stumpo
 Jennifer Turney
 Ava Williams

SUSTAINING ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS/PARTNERS

ACCES Employment
 ASSOCIUM
 Central Neighbourhood House
 Children's Aid Society of Toronto
 COSTI Immigrant Services
 East Metro Youth Services
 Fred Victor Centre
 IBEW Local 353
 North York Community House
 Parkdale Community Legal Services
 St. Christopher House
 St. Stephen's Community House
 Toronto Neighbourhood Centres
 VHA Home Healthcare
 Warden Woods Community Centre
 YMCA Toronto
 YWCA Toronto



The 2014 Frances Lankin Community Service Award Recipient — Kay Blair

In her ten years of service as President and CEO of United Way Toronto, Frances Lankin made an invaluable contribution to the non-profit community sector in Toronto. To acknowledge this decade of accomplishment, Social Planning Toronto established the “Frances Lankin Community Service Award” in 2011, on the occasion of Frances’ retirement from United Way Toronto. This award is presented annually to an individual who has made a sustained, significant contribution to the work of the non-profit community sector in Toronto.

It is our hope that this award will serve, on an ongoing basis, to inspire and acknowledge the special individuals whose work, dedication, and passion for community are the true embodiment of “community service.”



In 2014 this award was presented to Kay Blair. In her role as Executive Director of Community Microskills Development Centre, Kay has been highly active in the local community and throughout the GTA, and her expertise and leadership has been recognized by the broader community on many occasions.

Friends, family, and well-wishers joined us at the award ceremony, as well as Frances Lankin herself, who joined UWT President Susan McIsaac in presenting the award to Kay’s family and colleagues from Microskills. SPT was delighted to acknowledge Kay’s contribution to our sector by selecting her as the 2014 recipient of the award.

**Frances Lankin
2011**

**Liane Regendanz
2012**

**Charlotte Maher
2013**

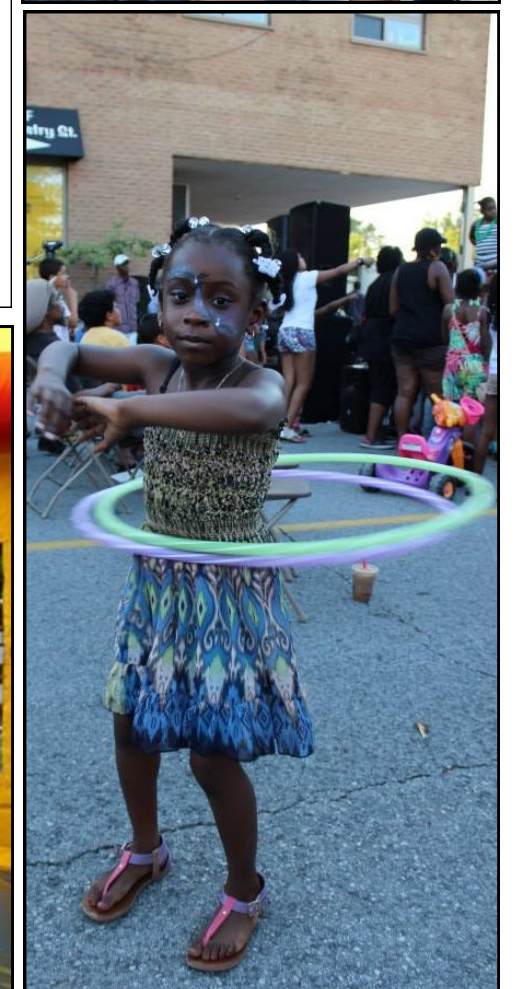
**Colin Hughes
2013**

**Rob Howarth
2013**



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At critical junctures in Toronto's history, Social Planning Toronto has played an important role in highlighting trends, pointing toward solutions, and mobilizing communities to make change. At this year's Annual General Meeting, we are reflecting on the impact that ***Metro Suburbs in Transition*** – a key publication of the former Metro Toronto Social Planning Council – has had on Toronto's development over the thirty-five years since it identified the fact that services in Toronto's inner suburbs were not reflecting the dramatic demographic changes that were taking place across the city. Over a quarter century later, initiatives such as United Way's 2003 Strong Neighbourhoods Task force and subsequent work in priority neighbourhoods across the city, and this year's "Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020" from the City of Toronto, are continuing to respond to the issues first identified by Marvyn Novick and his Social Planning colleagues back in 1979.

This is an indicator of not only the continued importance of the work of Social Planning Toronto and its predecessor organizations, but also of the necessity of continuing that work. It is always a gamble to predict the future, but we can hope, for exam-

ple, that the work of Social Planning Toronto and the Alliance for a Poverty-Free Toronto, led by Winston Tinglin until his retirement last June, to develop strategy to eliminate poverty in Toronto, will have had a similar impact on Toronto a quarter century from now. City Council's unanimous vote, just last month, to develop a poverty reduction strategy for Toronto is an important first step along that road.

In addition to its visionary role on the big issues of poverty, inequality, and equity in our city and beyond, SPT continues to play a vital role in making smaller, but significant changes for the better in both local communities and across the city. Whether it is supporting emerging events like the successful "WestWon" Festival in Mount Dennis, bringing together local communities with the City's Ombudsman, to enhance access to her services across the city, or winning gains for communities and the organizations that serve them through the city budget process, Social Planning Toronto continues to link its research capacity to real community mobilization in ways that truly do "improve the quality of life of all residents of Toronto."

I have been fortunate to have the support of a strong, dedicated Board team, who have not only provided strategic direction and perspective, but who have pitched in to provide strong support in organizational policy development, financial management and fundraising, as well as representing SPT in a variety of forums. I want to acknowledge the contributions of departing Board members O'Neil Edwards, Mikhael Bornstein, and Joe Cressy, who have all brought valuable skills and insights to our Board table – we will miss their contribution. The Board also continues to appreciate the quality and sheer range of work accomplished by the SPT staff – truly an impressive team.

Social Planning Toronto appreciates the many partners who make our continued work possible – we look forward to continued collaboration and shared leadership as we face the challenges of 2014 and the years to come.

Miriam DiGiuseppe
President, SPT Board of Directors



COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL OF TORONTO
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2013

	2013	2012
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash	\$ 45,766	\$ 61,491
Short-term investments (note 3)	11,370	10,997
Sales and property taxes recoverable	37,830	46,645
Grants receivable	52,531	22,794
Other amounts receivable	11,722	23,167
Prepaid expenses and deposits	34,129	20,781
Capital assets (note 4)	193,348	185,875
Trust funds administered for others, net (note 5)	864	1,728
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	26,800	13,410
Deferred project funds (note 7)	\$ 221,012	\$ 201,013
Trust funds administered for others, net (note 5)	\$ 52,908	\$ 39,913
Net assets	32,859	44,865
Unrestricted	85,767	84,778
	26,800	13,410
	112,567	98,188
	108,445	102,825
	\$ 221,012	\$ 201,013

Approved on behalf of the Board:
M. DiGiuseppe, Director
M. Novick, Director

COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL OF TORONTO

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2013

	2013		2012	
	General Operations	Projects	Total	Total
REVENUE				
United Way grant	\$ 636,415	\$ 122,000	\$ 758,415	\$ 764,086
City of Toronto	368,005	45,410	413,415	384,074
Foundation grants	-	190,727	190,727	185,846
Government of Canada	-	65,645	65,645	120,889
Fees for services	-	15,322	15,322	73,799
Donations and other fundraising	4,465	41,900	46,365	50,727
Membership fees	47,065	-	47,065	44,465
Event registrations	-	21,225	21,225	-
Other income	13,650	-	13,650	13,740
	<u>1,069,600</u>	<u>502,229</u>	<u>1,571,829</u>	<u>1,637,626</u>
EXPENSES				
Salaries and benefits	785,548	241,642	1,027,190	1,091,211
Program	29,914	139,072	168,986	151,660
Building occupancy	141,050	20,404	161,454	164,105
Office and administration (note 4)	87,810	12,104	99,914	116,077
Events and fundraising	3,571	35,177	38,748	10,799
Purchased services	2,492	29,615	32,107	66,115
Travel	11,565	3,455	15,020	17,581
Insurance	6,490	-	6,490	6,208
Professional fees	5,671	150	5,821	6,609
Staff development	3,386	-	3,386	3,760
Other	7,089	4	7,093	8,829
	<u>1,084,586</u>	<u>481,623</u>	<u>1,566,209</u>	<u>1,642,954</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses from operations	(14,986)	20,606	5,620	(5,328)
Charges for administrative support	<u>20,606</u>	<u>(20,606)</u>	-	-
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	5,620	-	5,620	(5,328)
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>102,825</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>102,825</u>	<u>108,153</u>
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$ 108,445	\$ -	\$ 108,445	\$ 102,825



Social Planning Toronto's value as a resource, advocate, and valued partner for the non-profit community sector is reflected in our growing organizational membership – in 2013, just under 200 agencies and community groups were organizational members of SPT. Through our electronic newsletter, our social media presence, and the growing influence of our "TogetherToronto.ca" petition website, Social Planning Toronto's work is reaching tens of thousands of Toronto residents each year.

2013 posed some significant challenges for SPT – we keenly felt the gaps created by the retirements of Margaret Hau and Winston Tinglin, and, like most other organizations in the non-profit sector, we continue to face the pressure to do more with less. Despite these constraints, SPT has continued to produce quality research, to make that research accessible through a range of publications aimed at a variety of audiences, and through community events that provide opportunities to link our research with community mobilization and action.

SPT continues to benefit from a dedicated, hard-working staff. Our research team, Beth Wilson, Nav Sidhu, and Lesley Johnston, supported by a number of students, (paid!) interns, and volunteers, make a major contribution to the knowledge we have about housing, education, community services, and labour markets in our city, and bring that knowledge to life through their involvement in an incredible range of organizations, networks, and coalitions seeking – and often winning – real changes in policies and practices that make a real difference in the lives of residents of Toronto, particularly for marginalized individuals and communities. Our community planners – Israt Ahmed, Yasmin Haq, Richard DeGaetano, and Cutty Duncan – ground our work in local communities, building and sustaining the local networks that ensure that our research and policy work is relevant and effective at the local level, and giving 'legs' to our city-wide work in Etobicoke, Scarborough and York. Our administrative and program support team – Maria Serrano, Mohamed Ismail, Mary Micallef, with assistance from Ryan Tilley on membership, Sarah Matsushita on communications and Besrat Solomon on bookkeeping – make sure that the myriad responsibilities and tasks that need to be done to make sure that things actually happen – do an amazing job of literally doing more with less.

We are also an organization that continues to benefit from a dedicated, hard-working Board. Being an engaged, effective Board member is becoming more and more difficult for volunteers across the sector. SPT is truly fortunate to have a marvellous Board team, who step up and plays a vital role in the direction of the organization, as well as providing me with valued support and counsel. I particularly want to acknowledge the extraordinary contribution made by Board President Miriam DiGiuseppe, who not only provides effective leadership at the governance level, but has also devoted countless hours of painstaking work to ensure that our publications, presentations, and policies are of the highest quality.

SPT continues to benefit from the support of a wide range of individuals, organizations, and funders, who continue to show their belief in our work, and its impact, by giving of their time, talents, and resources. We look forward to maintaining and building on all of these important partnerships in the years to come.

John Campey
Executive Director





It All Begins with Space

Maximizing use of public assets for engaged and healthier neighbourhoods in Toronto



SPACE Coalition

Social Planning Toronto and the SPACE Coalition released two new reports this year: **Public Space for Public Use: A Review of Community Access to School and Municipal Facilities in Ontario** and **It All Begins with Space: Maximizing use of public assets for engaged and healthier neighbourhoods**.

This research reveals the importance of having access to safe public space and identifies the continuing barriers to accessing that space, both in Toronto and across the Province, focusing on the importance of safe spaces for youth and importance of community hubs in promoting neighbourhood health.

City Council committed to ten new appropriately-funded youth drop-in spaces in the 2014 budget. SPACE will be working to support Community Recreation for All in monitoring the implementation of the drop-in program, to ensure it meets youth and community needs.

Triple Threat to Equity Campaign

Thanks to the tireless work of many committed parents, students and community members on the Triple Threat to Equity Campaign, eight TDSB Model Schools coaches, previously cut, will be returned to schools for 2014-15. In addition, the Campaign built greater awareness about the importance of using the Learning Opportunities Grant as it was intended – to fund additional supports for students facing socio-economic challenges in order to close the opportunity and achievement gap. Significant progress was also made in making the accounting for this grant more transparent.

A second opportunity lies before us. This year the Toronto District School Board will engage in a two-year prospective budgeting exercise and will be setting a tentative budget for 2015-16 and 2016-17. The Triple Threat to Equity campaign will continue to raise the issue and promote the need to make budgetary decisions with an equity lens.



Middle Childhood Matters Coalition Toronto

The Middle Childhood Matters Coalition Toronto, of which SPT is an active member, is a group of social service agencies and community members who are committed to working together with parents to increase access to high quality out of school time programs for all children ages 6-12 in Toronto. It is significant that the City has made clear its commitment to children ages 6 to 12 with the *Middle Childhood Strategy*.

Subsequently, we have seen the expansion of over 500 subsidized spaces for child care, the implementation of the Swim to Survive program, an increase to CIP funding to support community programs, the 16-site expansion of the After-School Recreation and Care (ARC), expansion of the Student Nutrition program, and the creation of a position within Children's Services for a Middle Childhood Strategy Coordinator to oversee implementation of the *Middle Childhood Strategy*.



LOST in the Shuffle:

IN SUPPORT OF CHILDREN IN TRANSITION



Staff Resource Manual & Workshop



Lost in the Shuffle: The Impact of Homelessness on Children's Education in Toronto

In response to the previously published SPT report, *Lost in the Shuffle*, SPT and Aisling Discoveries Child and Family Centre, with support from the Toronto Community Foundation and the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, have released *Lost in the Shuffle: In Support of Children in Transition*, a resource manual and a workshop guide that aims to build a greater understanding of the barriers children living in shelters face in their attempts to be successful in school, while providing strategies for school and shelter staff to assist children.

The workshop explores the underlying context of the lives of many of the children who live in shelters. Many of the resources in this manual are meant to be shared by education and shelter staff with parents, to help them navigate their way in a stressful time.

Minimum Wage Campaign

Over the past year, Social Planning Toronto has been actively working with various community partners across the City and the Province, such as the Workers' Action Centre, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, ACORN and Toronto & York Region Labour Council, on the Campaign to Raise the Minimum Wage. The goal of the campaign was to end the 3 year provincial minimum wage freeze and raise the rate from \$10.25 to \$14.00, to lift low-income workers and families out of poverty.

Over the past twelve months, coalition members worked to bring the minimum wage issue onto the public and political agenda – from intensive organizing and outreach, research, MPP meetings and deputations, media work and monthly community-based and social media actions. Earlier this year the Ontario government announced that it would raise the minimum wage in June 2014 to \$11.00 and introduce legislation to index it to the rate of inflation.



Community Organizing in Scarborough

SPT's senior planner provided significant consultation and coordination support to many community engagement initiatives in Scarborough in 2014. SPT's community forum with City Ombudsman, Fiona Crean, was received with enthusiasm in the Scarborough Bluffs area where residents learned about the opportunity to strengthen city government through the office of the Ombudsman. SPT's other forums included TTC privatization, growing income gap, and impact of immigration policy. SPT also provided important support to Scarborough Executive Director's Network that plays a leadership role in advocating for community investment in Scarborough.

SPT also leads advocacy and knowledge mobilization activities in Scarborough through Scarborough Anti-Poverty Coalition in addressing growing income gap and employment barriers. SPT successfully organized a \$14 minimum wage rally with partners and raised awareness on this issue. SPT is currently leading the process of setting up a Community Planning Board in East Scarborough that was recommended by the Planning and Growth Management Committee to be included as a pilot project with the Chief City Planner.

York Youth Coalition

ANC—Mount Dennis provides support for the York Youth Coalition which continued to support local youth serving organizations in coordinating local initiatives and filling service gaps for local youth. Activities included a youth leadership summit, regular information sharing meetings with local youth workers, hosting community forums on Equity in Education and advocating to the Toronto Police Services as part of the ‘Campaign to Stop Police Carding’.

Etobicoke Civic Engagement

For the 2013 and 2014 Toronto City budget processes, the SPT Community Planner in Etobicoke organized a number of civic engagement/public information sessions between Commitment to Community (C2C) and several seniors groups operating in the Rexdale area, as well as supporting community forums on the budget in the Lakeshore.

Outreach to youth to consult with the Etobicoke Youth Network was organized in several neighbourhoods with high needs populations in social housing in wealthy central Etobicoke. Youth were engaged in the development of funding proposals for the creation of a Central Etobicoke Youth and Family (CEYF) Community Hub that would bring together service providers, City departments, and grass roots groups in a community-run space.

SPT also coordinated a number of public meetings for the City of Toronto’s Ombudsman, Fiona Crean, to meet residents and community service providers in discussion of the role of the Ombudsman’s office.



2014 City Budget Watch

Through its annual budget process, Toronto City Council makes decisions about how to allocate billions in public dollars. It is arguably the most important set of decisions that City Council makes all year. The budget is where the rubber hits the road, where decisions are made about our public services; it is where priorities are set that shape the health, wellbeing and opportunities of residents across Toronto. Social Planning Toronto believes that residents should be at the centre of this decision-making.

SPT monitors and reports on the budget process, step-by-step, helping residents to understand and engage in the budget process. City Budget Watch provides a level of analysis and reporting that cannot be found anywhere else. SPT further engages community members and supports civic engagement through our budget events. In 2013, SPT expanded its budget forums to include Scarborough, York and downtown sessions. SPT staff encourage city councillors to hold their own budget town halls, and assist community groups with ‘Budget 101’ training sessions.



Solidarity City: Access Without Fear

Social Planning Toronto, in partnership with groups such as Parkdale Community Legal Services, No One Is Illegal Toronto and the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, joined together as the Solidarity City Network to help improve access to municipal programs and services for non-status and precarious immigration status migrants.

Our advocacy efforts prevailed in February 2013 when Toronto’s City Council voted overwhelmingly to pass an historic ‘Access without Fear’ motion (the first of its kind in Canada), re-affirming its commitment to providing services to the non-status community. Along with the Network, SPT has been working closely throughout the year with city staff to develop and implement strategies to improve access to services by ensuring staff training and public education/outreach to non-status residents throughout Toronto.

Action for Neighbourhood Change - Mount Dennis

ANC continued to make strides in 2013-14. Starting with our West End Local Economic Development initiative, residents worked in partnership with University of Toronto Geography Professor, Dr. Katherine Rankin and the Anti Poverty Community Organizing and Learning (APCOL) initiative to develop a local grass roots response aimed at improving the local economic conditions in Mount Dennis. This work saw the creation of research with small businesses and entrepreneurs, a community-business summit and the creation of a local economic development publication and progress towards creating a local employment project with Irving Tissue to provide job opportunities to Mount Dennis residents.

West Won Fest moved to another level in 2013 and we expect further growth in 2014! This exciting summer festival officially became a street festival, as we were successful in closing off Ray Avenue just south of Weston Road. With financial support for the first time from the City of Toronto Community Festival grant, the festival drew a record crowd of 1500 residents and local performers.

Our Emmett space project passed another hurdle with a lease agreement from TDSB which will allow us to move the project on to its second phase offering, providing organizing space for the Mount Dennis Boys and Girls Club and Emmett avenue residents.

Plans for 2014 and beyond include creation of a local news publication, community forums on ‘Equity in Education’ and ‘Local Economic Development’, and a project to create local employment opportunities, local leadership development, and creation of new space for community initiatives.

Action on Housing and Homelessness

Social Planning Toronto works with residents, tenants and community groups to advance the human right to safe, decent and affordable housing. SPT plays a leadership role on this issue, is active with Housing Action Now, a city-wide network that informs, mobilizes and advocates on housing and homelessness issues, is a supporter of the City of Toronto’s Close the Housing Gap campaign, and a contributing member of the Alliance for Affordable Co-operative Housing.



In the Winter of 2013, activists intensified their calls for City Hall to open new shelter space for people who are homeless. In response to rising concerns about shelter access, SPT conducted a short survey of community-run emergency shelters in 2013, adding an important voice to the debate and providing support to the call for new shelter space. SPT worked with dozens of community groups and engaged residents across the city to support the call.

In response, Toronto City Council took a number of steps forward by first acknowledging the problem, second, by passing a motion to set shelter system occupancy at or below 90% (a smart policy from the late 1990s that the City had abandoned for more than a decade), and third, by opening a temporary shelter for women with plans to create a new permanent shelter. The 90% target has not been achieved yet but the move is in the right direction.

SPT also released a position paper on affordable homeownership to inform the review on Toronto’s Official Plan, successfully advocated with partners and residents to stop contracting out of good jobs in food and custodial services in City shelters, and supported community calls for the development of an emergency shelter for LGBTQ youth who are at increased risk of homelessness and face barriers and safety concerns in the shelter system.



Removing the Canadian Experience Barrier Forum

On February 19, 2014, the Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership (TWLIP) Civic Engagement Group, supported by Community Planner, Yasmin Haq, held a successful forum on the Ontario Human Rights Commission's new policy on 'Canadian Experience' as a ground for discrimination.

Barbara Hall, Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, was the keynote speaker, and set the tone of the forum by introducing the policy and sharing her experiences working with other experts who are also passionate about the issue.

The forum also included a breakout session which provided opportunities for the participants to share their thoughts and opinions in a smaller group setting. The entire forum was videotaped and will be available as a resource to groups that were unable to attend the forum. The video will be posted on the SPT and TWLIP websites and possibly on other partners' websites for accessibility to a wider audience.

Below: OHRC's Chief Commissioner, Barbara Hall, at the 'Canadian Experience' Forum



Alliance for a Poverty Free Toronto

The Alliance for a Poverty Free Toronto (APT) is a coalition of people living in poverty, non-profit organizations, community groups and labour who work to focus on the impact of poverty in our city. Social Planning Toronto provides coordination and convening support to APT.



SPT's former Director of Community Engagement Winston Tinglin provided leadership with APT partners in drafting, revising, and releasing a new report, ***Toward a Poverty Elimination Strategy for the City of Toronto*** that laid out a strong set of recommendations for residents, city leaders and different levels of government to take action on poverty.

As a result of APT's report and advocacy initiative, and with the strong support of other organizational partners and Councillors, Toronto City Council passed a motion (26-0) to develop an anti-poverty strategy for the city.

Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020: Neighbourhood Improvement Areas

Prior to defining the new "Neighbourhood Improvement Areas", the City of Toronto organised community consultations, but none in the York South-Weston area. On a very tight time-line, local SPT Community Planner, Yasmin Haq, with support from other community groups, coordinated a local consultation at SPT's York Office in which about 75 residents and agencies participated.

According to the *(March 4, 2014) Report from the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration on the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 - Recommended Neighbourhood Improvement Areas*, the riding has six Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. They include the previous two "Priority Neighbourhoods" – Weston and Mount Dennis and the newly identified areas within our community: Beechborough-Greenbrook, Rockcliffe-Smythe, Rustic and Keele-Black Creek (ranked as having the lowest 'equity score' in the city).

Toronto Community Development Institute (TCDI)

TCDI co-sponsored two conferences during 2013. At the first annual Community Worker Program conference at George Brown College, TCDI played a large role in promotion and outreach, set up a Democracy Wall for reflection and self-expression by participants, and surveyed attendees through a Speaker's Corner function. We also acted as advisors to the planning team and assisted in facilitating the break-out group discussions. Almost 200 people attended what is now being called the Tommy Douglas Summer Institute.

In partnership with the Anti-Poverty Community Organizing and Learning (APCOL) project, TCDI members helped plan, organize, and implement a wrap-up conference combined with a series of workshops and guest speakers, titled "Push Back! Move Forward!". We assisted the APCOL organizers throughout the conference's development, including doing the registration, a Democracy Wall, leading two workshops, and hosting a follow-up event to maintain continuity with activists.

Commitment to Community (C2C) Campaign

Social Planning Toronto has provided coordination support to the C2C Campaign three years in a row with its partners, allies and Toronto residents. Through the 2014 city budget process, C2C helped build support for significant investments in public and community services. These new and enhanced programs will improve the quality of life for many Toronto residents, diverse communities and neighbourhoods. C2C successfully secured new recreation spaces using the St. Stephen's best practices model, and free recreation programs for adults and children that were not funded throughout the summer of 2014.

C2C also helped obtain a 2.2% inflationary increase for the community partnership and investment program (CPIP) which supports the delivery of community services through non-profit community organization. City council also added \$300,000 to the CPIP budget to fund new programs and projects considered high priority in underserved areas. The budget also included full funding for the year 2 implementation of the student nutrition 5 year expansion plan.

City Council did not reverse the 4.3 Million cut to homelessness programs but added \$75,000 to Tenant Outreach and Organizing program to facilitate tenant education, training and other support. However, councillors passed a motion to address challenges around the Housing Stabilization Fund and will look into monitoring and oversight of the program through a report in the first quarter. All these crucial gains in the 2014 budget were made possible by the hard work of C2C staff, allies, partners, and engaged resident volunteers.



Social Planning Toronto Research Roundtable

On November 4, 2013, Social Planning Toronto held its annual Research Roundtable. In partnership with the Toronto Workforce Innovation Group, McMaster University's School of Labour Studies and the Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario (PEPSO) research project, "Getting In & Staying In: Labour Market Challenges Facing Youth" focused on the growing problem of youth unemployment and under-employment. Over 120 participants, ranging from community organizations, academics, government representatives, and youth, attended six different panel sessions throughout the day to hear from key experts on this issue.

The roundtable's keynote address was given by assistant professor of sociology from the University at Buffalo, Erin Hatton (author of the book *The Temp Economy: From Kelly Girls to Permatemps in Postwar America*), who provided a macro analysis of the changing nature of the labour market and rising income inequality that has played a key role in affecting youth employment outcomes. Other speakers of the day included: Angella MacEwen (Canadian Labour Congress), Alastair Woods (Canadian Federation of Students), Jim Stanford (Unifor), David Doorey (York University), and Maya Bhullar (SEIU).

