



**BNRC**

Brampton Neighbourhood Resource Centre

Providing Family-Focused, Community-Based Programs Since 1988

**COMMUNITY**  
**PULSE**

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## A QUARTERLY UPDATE ON THE HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITY

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### Brampton: A Prosperous City - A Community in Peril

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, in her annual speech to the Brampton Board of Trade – an unofficial “state of the city” address – Mayor Susan Fennell portrayed a picture of Brampton as a healthy, prosperous, and financially sound city, which still holds the prestigious AAA credit rating. Mayor Fennell promised intervention to deal with the current “unprecedented economic situation”. This positive and optimistic report, although mentioning spending cuts, did not explicitly refer to easing the tax burden of residents or helping starving local businesses weather the storm. More importantly, the report did not have any reference to the state of health of our community and especially its most vulnerable residents, already in dire need for intervention even before the current economic downturn. Here are some of the challenges Brampton is facing and how BNRC is helping to address them.

### NEWCOMER NEWS: Inclusion and Integration

**Pulse Rate: Poor = 30 bpm**

In a report entitled “Profile of the Peel Community”, recently released by the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, a well-known factual reality was once again confirmed: “Too many recent immigrants in our community live in poverty, and the vast majority is identified as members of a visible minority group, predominantly South Asians, Chinese, Blacks and Hispanics.” **The unemployment and underemployment rates for recent immigrants are incredibly high. Even among those with university degrees, diplomas or certificates it is over 10%.** I firmly believe that we do not need more descriptive reports of the obvious. It is overdue for all community stakeholders to take action to develop and implement a successful social and economic strategy for the integration of newcomers into the Canadian workforce. Only by eliminating the identified barriers related to language skills, cultural differences, credentials and experience validation, and, of course, prejudice and employment discrimination, will we then, be able to fulfill our promise as a prosperous and harmonious city.

#### **BNRC Newcomers to Canada Programs**

*To facilitate the integration of newcomers to Brampton, BNRC offers, free of charge, multiple settlement services, as well as Language Instruction and Job Search Programs.*

### COMMUNITY SAFETY: Protecting Our Children and “At-Risk” Youth

**Pulse Rate: Poor = 30 bpm**

In recent years, there have been increasing occurrences of violence in our city. Youth crime is growing, specifically attributed to a large number of “at-risk” youth. The Brampton Guardian often reports disturbing news; “Gunmen rob teenager on midway walk”; “Robbers hold workers in fridge” (an instance in which three teenagers were arrested). Youth resorting to violence is not always, but very often, the result of our failure as families and society. Failure not only to provide guidance and instill moral values, but also failure as a consequence of unfairness, disparity, lack of opportunities, divisiveness, and social exclusion. The message is clear: **We ought to join forces to ensure a well deserved bright future to all our children and youth.**

### **BNRC Youth Programs**

*Through a variety of programs and services, BNRC provides youth with opportunities for social, educational, and recreational development, as well as programs aimed to address school violence, discrimination, bullying, hate crimes, and teen pregnancy reduction.*

## **ACCESS AND EQUITY: Women and Seniors Report**

**Pulse Rate: Poor = 40 bpm**

There is no question in my mind that both the City of Brampton and Canada have made great progress and are ahead in legislating, implementing and enforcing women's rights. However, in some segments of the greater population (and in Brampton), we have yet to achieve full gender equality. Once age, race, and country of origin are added to the equation, the picture becomes even more disturbing, as the notion of absolute equality dissipates. Just a few days ago, media outlets reported that there are "barriers in health care for senior women of colour". The findings, as well as a long list of recommendations, were made apparent by a government funded project titled *Empowering and Strengthening Senior Women for Improve Health*, conducted by The Peel Fountain of Wisdom Senior Services, and while poignant these results should not come as a surprise. Socio-economic disparity, ethnicity, language and cultural barriers, added to gender and age, significantly affect access to health care, as it affects access to employment, housing, and sometimes even social services. Women, children, families, the elderly, and the disadvantaged are all our fellow Brampton community members: **they need help.**

### **BNRC Family and Community Programs**

*At BNRC, several Family and Community programs are available aimed to empower women, support parents and families in need of assistance, and facilitate the engagement between socially isolated seniors and children.*

## **CONCLUDING PULSE: Measuring the Pulse of Our Community\***

**Overall Pulse: Poor = 37 bpm**

Brampton is a city in apparent good financial shape. Brampton residents, under the leadership of successful business people and the local authorities have worked hard to attain this level of success and certainly deserve praise for their accomplishments. But this success isn't without peril. Our prosperity should compel us to set the stage for exercising social responsibility, engagement, fairness, compassion and social inclusion. Together, we need to look after all underprivileged strata of our population to make sure that they are not left behind due to reasons beyond their control. Let us make sure that they can share and enjoy our dreams, otherwise our prosperity will not last.

### **Connect to BNRC**

*Though presently under funded, BNRC is fully committed and dedicated to its work in the community. We look forward to building partnerships with the Brampton business community, local and regional authorities, provincial and federal governments, foundations and other stake holders. Help us in our aim to ensure that all necessary resources are available to address the dire needs of our most vulnerable Bramptonians to ensure sustainability, prosperity and fairness.*

\*A healthy pulse ranges from 50 to 100.

Below 50 indicates support is needed.

Over 100 indicates too fast a pace may lead to implosion.