March 31, 2009 marked the end of an era for the Family Home Visitor (FHV) program at The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton. As of the beginning of April, the Family Home Visitor program moved from SPRC to Wesley Urban Ministries. The SPRC has been one of six organizations helping to provide this service for new parents for the last thirteen years. Over that time, the SPRC’s six Family Home Visitors have offered culturally appropriate assistance to parents in almost a dozen languages.

The FHVs also introduced new parents to the resources and services available in the Hamilton community.

All of the staff at the SPRC appreciate the years of dedication and commitment to the community that the FHVs have provided. Many strong friendships were also formed and we will miss each of our former colleagues very much. We wish them well and know that they will continue to offer tremendous support to new parents. Thank you to Nino’s Ristorante for their support.
EVENTS

THE SPRC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

FROM NEIGHBOURHOOD TO NEIGHBOURHOOD: BUILDING A COMMON AGENDA

On February 24, The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction and The Affordable Housing Flagship sponsored a presentation by Sherri Torjman, a leading expert in social policy. Ms Torjman shared the highlights of her latest report, Community Roles in Policy with a packed room at the Hamilton Convention Centre. A panel discussion featured Judith Bishop (Hamilton Wentworth District School Board Trustee), Madina Wasuge (Executive Director of the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion), and Chris Murray (City Manager for the City of Hamilton).

You can access a PDF copy of Sherri Torjman’s Community Roles in Policy from: http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/738ENG.pdf

THE SPRC ANNIVERSARY MEETING

The SPRC celebrated National Volunteer Week from April 19 to April 25. We wish to thank all our community volunteers, and especially our Board members, who contribute so much to our organization.

Please check our website or call for further details.

162 King William St, Suite 103 • Hamilton ON • L8R 3N9 • 905 522 1148 • sprc@sprc.hamilton.on.ca
Over the course of one year, the Bridging the Digital Divide in Hamilton project has helped over 200 children, youth, parents, seniors and families by drastically increasing the number of computers, access to training and Internet access of people living in low income in the Hamilton community.

With funding support from the United Way of Burlington & Greater Hamilton, this project addresses the issue of poverty by bridging the digital divide which is the unequal accessing and usage of computers and technology based on income level. The digital divide potentially has a devastating long-term effect on people who may experience difficulties in competing fully in the labour market as they are unable to gain the technology skills. The project collects computer donations and works with neighbourhood hubs to increase computer access and recruit volunteers to develop programs in these neighbourhood hubs.

The Bridging the Digital Divide project has provided computers to four community hubs: McQuesten Community Centre at St. Helen’s Catholic Elementary School, S.T.A.R. Hamilton (Skills Through Activity and Recreation), CAPC (Community Action Program for Children), and the Bridging the Digital Divide Success Story Dominic Agostino Riverdale Recreation Centre. In these community hubs these computers assist children in after-school homework clubs, senior’s programs, summer programming for youth to help with resume writing, job searching, internet access, learning of basic computer skills, and internet browsing.

A significant amount of the progress in this project would not have been possible without the support of greenBYTE by the St. Leonard’s Society of Hamilton. Other contributions have come from Digital Den in Ancaster, Davies in Hamilton, Discovery Computers in Stoney Creek, Lara Internet in Burlington, McMaster University, and individuals.

Overall, the project is serving its purpose and exceeding its outcome. Volunteers have largely been involved and have been assisting at all of the above listed facilities. With not enough funds mid-way in the project to the Bridging the Digital Divide project is truly a success for families, children, youth, seniors and individuals in need.
United Way Campaign Exceeds Target

On February 5th, the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton announced it had reached and surpassed its goal of 6.8 million with a total of $6,930,672. The collaborative efforts of individuals helping to raise funds across Burlington and Hamilton made the campaign a great success. These funds will be invested in programs and services that help thousands of individuals in those communities.

The SPRC United Way Workplace Campaign was also a success. The SPRC exceeded its 2008 target of $7400 by raising $7,753.99. Special thanks to the members of the SPRC United Way Workplace Campaign Committee: Deirdre Dixon, Sara Mayo, Patti McNaney, Deirdre Pike, Heather Stevens, and Christina Walters. Also, many thanks to other staff, Board members, membership, and volunteers who donated and worked to make the campaign a tremendous achievement.

United Way Campaign Exceeds Target

SPRC Financial Administrator, Caroline Eyk, and a friend enjoy Feasting for the United Way, one of the many events from this year’s campaign.

The SPRC United Way team wishes to thank the numerous donors who generously supported our campaign:

Art Gallery of Hamilton, Bent Hair Design, Bootlegger, Buttram Farm, Hamilton Convention Centre, Hamilton Tiger Cats, Papagayo Restaurant, Plan B Organic Farm, Ross & McBride LLP, Service Master Cleaning, Simpler Thyme, Staircase Theatre, Tapestry Bistro, YWCA Hamilton

Darrel Skidmore (United Way Chief Executive Officer) and his wife, Pauline, visited the Tapestry Bistro to support the SPRC’s Feasting for the United Way.