



Canadian Red Cross

Croix-Rouge canadienne



Financially Assisted Social Prescribing (FASP) Quarterly Update

In this issue:

Page 1.....[Social Prescribing Community Fair](#)

Page 2.....[Community Health Funding Update](#)

Page 3.....[Collective Spotlight: YMCA HBB](#)

Page 4.....[FASP Team Updates](#)

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What is FASP?

The Canadian Red Cross has been collaborating with the [Greater Hamilton Health Network](#) and the Social Prescribing Service Coordination Community Collective (aka 'The Collective'), to develop Financially Assisted Social Prescribing (FASP). FASP is an innovative approach that will bring social prescribing to residents in Municipal wards 2, 3, and 4 in Hamilton, Ontario. The goal of the initiative is to increase health equity and informed care and services by bringing health, and community and social sectors together. On September 16, 2024, the FASP initiative officially launched its phased approach and began to develop a shared understanding of social prescribing within the community.

Thank you for attending the Social Prescribing Community Fair!

On March 26, 2026, the FASP project team celebrated International Social Prescribing Day by hosting its second annual community fair with partners across Hamilton, Ontario. Held at the David Braley Health Sciences Centre in downtown Hamilton, the fair brought together service providers, researchers, and service users from across the City to celebrate and learn about emerging social prescribing initiatives.

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Canadian Red Cross at the FASP fair

(Top Left to bottom right: Hansika Gunaratne, Jarrod Williamson, Valentina Latorre Franky, Chika Okafor, Bella Kang, Vanessa Raj, Abdul (Adam) Razak, Seated: Le-Tien Bhaskar, Sarah Cowie



Health, social, and community services sharing their work with the community at the FASP community fair.

43 Community Fair attendees

68 New connections made by attendees

“I have met more people today who understood what my needs were than any other event I’ve attended. Thank you for organizing this incredible collaborative space!”
- Event Attendee

Participating Partners

*Abrar Mental Health Services
 Afro Canadian Caribbean Association
 Alzheimer’s Society of Brant, Haldimand
 Norfolk, Hamilton Halton
 Centre de Santé Communautaire
 Hamilton/Niagara
 De dwa da dehs nye’s Aboriginal Health
 Centre
 Eva Rothwell Centre
 Good Shepherd Centres
 Green Venture*

*Hamilton/Burlington SPCA
 Hamilton Paramedic Services
 Luso Community Services
 Mishka Social Services
 Mission Services
 St. Matthew’s House
 Victorian Order of Nurses
 Wesley Urban Ministries
 YMCA Hamilton Burlington Brantford
 YWCA Hamilton*

The results are in! Community Health Funding - Iteration 1

The purpose of the Community Health Fund (CHF) is to deliver funds into the hands of people who need it most to support their individualized care plan co-developed with those providing link working within an organization’s social prescribing framework.

Results from the first CHF are currently being analyzed by the Red Cross with a new iteration of the Fund slated for a release in May 2026. The FASP team saw commendable success from all participating organizations, and a noticeable increase to additional organizations joining the Collective in 2025 from word of mouth. We are excited to share the results of the micro-grant six recipients were additionally awarded, results of the remaining recipients will be shared in the next Quarterly update in August.

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In May 2025, City of Hamilton's ward 4 Counsellor, Tammy Hwang, awarded the Canadian Red Cross with \$25,000 to support existing social prescribing endeavors in Municipal ward 4. Six recipients were awarded this micro-grant to top up their existing CHF funding, and their funded initiatives were implemented within a two-month period in Fall 2025.

"This is a good Government investment... the real return reaches beyond the individual served, to their friends and their family."

- Tammy Hwang, Counsellor ward 4, City of Hamilton, January 2026

\$23,772/ \$25,000

Funding utilization of CHF micro-grant for ward 4

212

Anticipated clients to be served in ward 4 with CHF

293

Actual clients served in ward 4 with micro-grant top-up funding

317

Total clients served in ward 4 with all CHF funds

Clients Served

Collective Spotlight: YMCA Hamilton | Burlington | Brantford

We're launching a new segment that puts the spotlight on organizations who have been accelerating the shared vision of social prescribing in the Hamilton community.

Prior to joining the Collective for social prescribing in Hamilton, Genevieve Hladysh, Vice President of Health, Fitness and Aquatics, and Theresa Wray, Membership Manager, have been paving the way for social prescribing across Southern Ontario. YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford (YMCA HBB) has taken part in various social prescribing pilots since 2021 including Black Social Prescribing with City of Hamilton partners: Hamilton Health Sciences, Refuge, and the Afro-Canadian Caribbean Association. YMCA HBB has also continued to launch social prescribing pilots in various spaces including social prescribing with Veterans and for outpatient families at Hamilton Health Sciences.

In 2025, YMCA HBB was awarded a total of \$25,000; \$20,000 from the CHF and an additional \$5,000 to further support those living in ward 4, a contribution made by Counsellor Tammy Hwang, City of Hamilton, ward 4. To read about their impact, check out [this blog post](#).

As a result of their participation in the first CHF, YMCA HBB was able to support individuals living in wards 2, 3, and 4 in Hamilton, ON. They intended to support 55 people, and instead supported over 300 individuals living in wards 2-4 over a 5-month period. YMCA HBB has made a significant number of connections and partnerships since joining the Social Prescribing Community Collective. One partnership to highlight is with Hamilton Health Sciences and the Hamilton Paramedics Community Program that additionally supported their delivery of the CHF within Emergency Rooms.

The learnings from this project have been transferred to other communities informing social prescription approaches. The YMCA HBB is currently preparing to launch a social prescription program for isolated seniors in Burlington.

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Here are some testimonials from YMCA HBB clients that speak to their work far better than we could:

“It’s getting harder and harder to make ends meet. As a retired senior on a fixed income, I came to the desk to cancel my membership as I could no longer afford it. The staff asked a few questions and then put me in touch with a YMCA leader. I was sad at the thought of cancelling as it’s my social life and I know it does me a world of good. Having access to recreation financial assistance allows me the chance to get some breathing room to get back on my feet and help deal with so much family trauma that I have since I was a child. The YMCA made it so easy to talk to staff and find solutions”.

“ I lost my job after having a heart attack and no longer being able to meet the physical demands. This started a process of me losing my housing and living in shelters. I moved to the YMCA and simply through having a conversation and sharing my story, they were able to support me with a membership and begin recovery with accessing the gym for daily workouts. It’s been hard but I feel so much better and can’t wait to start the cardiac rehab program starting in January”.

FASP Team Updates

A very bittersweet announcement that Leah Fuller and Le-Tien Bhaskar have left the FASP team to pursue senior opportunities within the Red Cross. Leah has been instrumental in leading community engagement within FASP including communications to over 200 partners, and the recruitment, onboarding and training of more than 20 volunteers, 10 advisory members, 40 community collective organizations and 8 working group members. Leah’s new role at the Red Cross is with the Government and Strategic Relations team. Le-Tien has been integral to launching social prescribing in Hamilton, even prior to her time with the Red Cross. Her continued efforts to expand social prescribing are now taking flight within the National and International space of this emerging and growing field. Le-Tien continues this very important work with the Canadian Institute for Social Prescribing, anchored by the Red Cross. Thank you and Goodbye, Leah and Le-Tien!

An additional goodbye to Bella Kang, Project Assistant for the 2026 Winter semester. Bella supported the team during a period of transition and showcased incredible dedication, resilience and approached challenges with enthusiasm. Sincerest thanks to you, Bella!

Welcome back to David Saldanha, Project Assistant from Summer 2025 as he takes on the remainder of the term contracts we have left on the FASP team as Program Coordinator, starting this April. David will be responsible for the Collective, communications and engagement of partners and collaborators, and wrapping up the remaining deliverables for 2026 - Welcome (back), David!

Get Involved

If you would like this document translated to French or are interested in knowing how you can get involved by joining as FASP’s Advisory Committee, Community Collective, Working Group, or Volunteer, please contact us:

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