



Centre des services
communautaires Vanier
Vanier Community
Services Centre



CHEO

Press release

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For immediate release

Social Prescribing for Children and Youth at the Vanier Social Pediatric Hub

Ottawa, Vanier - Over the past 7 months, the Vanier Social Pediatric Hub social prescribing team, including staff and expert social prescribing advisors, have been hard at work preparing for the launch of a social prescribing program for children and youth.

As a participant in the social prescribing program, a child/youth will work with their connector (social worker) to talk about what matters to them. Together, they will create a social prescription – a non-medical prescription for a community activity like soccer classes, arts and crafts programs, and music lessons. Their connector will support them to complete their social prescription by addressing any barriers they may face.

The social prescribing team partnered with *Me first*, a child and youth-centred communication hub in the UK, to develop child and youth-centred communication tools in both official languages for use in the program. This was accompanied by two days of *Me first* training on the fundamental principles of child and youth-centred communication and health coaching.

A program evaluation will be conducted to explore the experiences of participating children and youth and their families and the ways in which the program is impacting their health and wellbeing. The team also developed a community resource map and established community partnerships, which will allow them to address financial barriers that our families face by offering free or low cost social prescriptions.

“The Canadian Institute for Social Prescribing is thrilled to see the Vanier Social Pediatric Hub initiating a children and youth-focused social prescribing program. Along with being a valuable support to families, we look forward to new insights this project will generate

for Canada’s rapidly growing social prescribing movement.” - Sonia Hsiung, Director, Community Health and the Canadian Institute for Social Prescribing, Canadian Red Cross.

About social prescribing:

- Research shows that 80-90% of health and wellbeing is determined by non-medical factors – social prescribing offers a way to address these non-medical factors by connecting people to community resources through a social prescription.
- Research shows that social prescribing has positive impacts on the health and wellbeing of children and youth.
- There is growing interest in social prescribing around the world, with over 25 countries involved in the social prescribing movement.
- In Canada, the momentum around social prescribing was amplified with the launch of the Canadian Institute for Social Prescribing in 2022.
- Through a grant from the Public Health Agency of Canada Mental Health Promotion Innovation Fund, the Vanier Social Pediatric Hub, in partnership with CHEO, is launching the country's first social prescribing program for children and youth.

Thank you to our rapidly growing list of community partners!

Arts Alive and the National Arts Centre, the Bytown Museum, the Canadian Museum of Nature, Carleton University and the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights, CityKidz, the City of Ottawa, the Franco-Ontarian Autism Society, Ingenium – Canada’s Museums of Science and Innovation (Canada Agriculture and Food Museum, Canada Aviation and Space Museum, Canada Science and Technology Museum), Kids in Camp, Orkidstra, the Ottawa Museum Network, Ottawa Outdoor Gear Library, Ottawa Regional Youth Choir, Ten Oaks Project, The Door Youth Centre, and Twice Upon a Time.

Information:

- [Vanier Social Pediatric Hub – Social Prescribing website](#) (information about social prescribing, monetary and in-kind donation opportunities, community partners, donors, etc.)
- [Canadian Institute for Social Prescribing](#)
- [The Me First Health Coaching Model](#)

Source:

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