

## **Helen Carswell Chair in Community Engaged Research in the Arts**

Report on Brown Bag session

October 31, 2018



On Wednesday, the Carswell/York/RPSM partnership presented its first 'brown bag' session at the York-TD Community Engagement Centre located at the Yorkgate Mall.

Over lunchtime that day, there were two presentations - one by PhD candidate, Salah Wilson who not only presented relevant information on his continuing work to upgrade RPSM's steelpan programme but also provided live music! From a 'guys only' approach in Trinidad to the new Calypso/Jazz ensemble that Salah is holding at York, Salah provided fundamental information re steel pan pedagogy, highlighting challenges and pointing to solutions. Salah is sparking new life with suggestions for RPSM's steel pan programme which include inter-generational activities involving Seniors.

The dynamic duo of PhD candidate, Evelyn Amponsah and research partner Eden Abraham, shared the various steps that they are taking to enhance, transform and impact RPSM by identifying best practices for serving racialized communities. Their literature review helped to point the way and also identified some gaps in order to help RPSM successfully fulfil their mandate in the Jane-Finch area. Eden and Evelyn are now moving into the consultation phase of their research where they will seek, staff, student and parent participation. They are asking important questions such as 'What can RPSM do that schools aren't doing?' and have identified, for example, mentorship with people from within the community, as one of the key helpful components for increased success.

At this first 'brown bag' session, we welcomed some new community faces, the site coordinator for the RPSM Jane-Finch programming, Vanessa Chase, and Knowledge & Mobilisation Officer, Krista Jensen. In addition, we welcomed

Francesco Corsaro, York's new Senior Development Officer whose last position at the Opera House in downtown Toronto put him in a 'front row' seat to witness some of the challenges of meeting the needs of at-risk communities through artistic organizations.

After an initial networking time, light refreshments and the presentations, there was still time for the researchers to take questions and share clarifying information. Norma Sue Fisher-Stitt also announced that she is the Co-chair of 'Child of the Dance', a conference that has worldwide attendees that will be hosted at York in July 2021. Norma Sue is wondering aloud what synergies might be possible as York continues to connect with RPSM.

Our next 'brown bag' session is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 20** at 11:30 am back at the CEC. We look forward to seeing all of you there! Presenters, Joel Ong and Cathy Pavlik-Griffins will be on hand to present Joel's fascinating on-line look at student mobility on public transit and the impact on RPSM and Cathy's exciting take on how adverse childhood experiences may affect children in marginalized communities and consequently inform RPSM's classroom practices.

Congratulations to our fabulous researchers and to you for your continued support.

Best,

Karen Burke  
Associate Professor, Department of Music  
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design  
York University  
Ste. 355, Accolade East  
4700 Keele Street, Toronto ON Canada M3J 1P3  
tel 416.736.2100 ext. 77131  
fax 416.736.5321