ABLE- Accessing Income Boosting Benefits and Credits

Tanya Raso November 2, 2015

Jane Finch Community and Family Centre

Our Mission- We are a community based organization driven by passion innovation and a strong commitment to social justice, community engagement and collaboration.

Our Vision- Our vision is a healthy Jane-Finch Community -strong, inclusive, socially and politically active through diversity, opportunity and participation.

- COMMUNITY OFFICE
- FEPS-FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT & PROBLEM SOLVING
- OEYC-ONTARIO EARLY YEARS CENTRE
- THE SPOT-YOUTH
- COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH
- SOCIAL JUSTICE
- SENIOR PROGRAMS
- SETTLEMENT
- CENTRE FOR GREEN CHANGE
- ANC-ACTION FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD CHANGE

THEORY OF CHANGE

Better financial outcomes, decisions and security for low income people.



MEDIUM TO LONG TERM OUTCOMES

- •Residents have the knowledge to be effective financial decisionmakers
- •Knowledge of financial systems and ability to navigate the systems
- •Increased capacity to create realistic plans and implement financial strategies
- •Make decisions appropriate to current lifecycle stage



SHORT TERM OUTCOMES

- •Improved financial knowledge •Improved confidence in financial
- •Improved confidence in financial literacy skills
- •Reduced stress, intimidation, and vulnerability to predators
- •Increased awareness of rights and options
- Access to systems and supports for accessing them, across cultures

Theory of Change – Financial Empowerment and Problem-Solving

PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS

- Workshops
- •One-to-one support
- Coaching to problem-solve
- Advocacy
- Program development
- •Basis financial management training
- •Accessible and language specific resources and information
- Income tax clinics/filing assistance

ASSETS

- •Residents want to improve their financial literacy
- •Residents are able to make financial changes with enhanced knowledge
- •Residents utilizing FEPS improve their financial situations and share that information with others
- Residents are resourceful



COMMUNITY CONTEXT

- •Low in-come residents may not have knowledge about their entitlements
- •Systemic barriers often impact how residents leverage support
- •Prior to FEPS, residents did not have access to free income tax services and often paid large fees
- Residents lacked understanding about the impact of money-lending and interest rates



KEY LEARNINGS

- Participants and community workers have learned a great deal about Canada Revenue Agency
 - The credits available to families
 - Maximizing their benefits/ credits.
 - Accessing retro active amounts
 - Lowering debt by applying for Tax payer relief program
 - Disability Tax Credit Certificate
- The importance of increasing knowledge and skills around Financial Literacy in order for participants to become better advocates for themselves

Importance of partnerships

- CVITP, gave agency software 10 years of Income tax programs
- Computers to increase ability to serve more participants.
- A liason to support staff and volunteers during tax clinic
- Volunteers
 - Importance of training volunteers with the software
 - Shadowing staff
 - Sensitivity training to learn about the participants that we serve

Challenges

- Language barriers
- Fear of immigration Status
- Funding
- Cashing Government cheques (Predatory Lending institutions)
- Biggest challenge is participants and staff on occasion misinforming one another when they are not 100% sure of the information being shared.

Research Reports/Tools

openpolicyontario.com
The Working Poor in Toronto Region
John Stapleton

Yorku.ca

Engaging Marginalized Youth in Financial Literacy Programs
Imo Ek-Udofia and Brenda Spotton Visano

Janefinchcentre.org
Financial Literacy E-Book english/spanish

Story



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