



Parent Outreach Worker program evaluation report 2024



Introduction

The Parent Outreach Worker (POW) Program is one of the key projects led by the Nurturing Neighbourhoods Initiative; a collaboration of partner organizations within the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition. The POW Program aims to provide early identification, intervention and increased access to services for vulnerable children and families.

The POW program initially launched in 2012 to serve the Brant Avenue and Two Rivers neighbourhoods. It has since expanded to include Grange Hill East, Onward Willow, and the Guelph Community Health Centre (Guelph CHC) Clinic.

The data in this report was gathered from a participant survey in autumn 2024.

The last evaluation of the POW program was in 2016 and included a participant survey. This survey was updated, with minor changes, and distributed to all current and former POW clients.

The survey aimed to measure the program's impact on clients.



The survey was hosted online through REDCap and promoted via Guelph CHC channels and POW networks in autumn, 2024.

173 community members participated.

These key outcomes were evaluated:

- Priority families are accessing the POW Program
- Families have more positive information supports
- Families experience increased mutual aid
- Families have improved awareness of and use of formal supports
- Children have access to early assessment and support
- Families have increased access to basic needs
- Families are empowered to meet their needs
- Formalized services are experienced as more accessible, responsive and effective
- Neighbourhoods are stronger, safer and more resilient





Summary of results and impact

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Parent Outreach Workers are a team of 4.5 full time outreach workers at Guelph CHC.

The team is embedded in Guelph neighbourhoods . They identify, engage, and provide one-on-one support to families with children (ages 0-18) who are isolated or may be experiencing challenges at home.

The POW program continues to achieve its intended outcomes. POWs...



improve access to community services



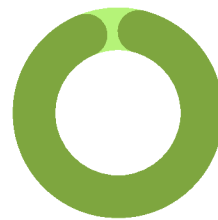
empower families



help to build a strong and resilient community

POWs are a vital community resource. The program provides families with practical support, guidance, and encouraging community engagement.

Success is driven by the dedication of POWs, whose trust-building, active listening and dedicated support make a meaningful difference in the lives of families.



97.8% of participants reported that their POW has helped them, their neighbours, or their neighbourhood as a whole



This program and these workers have such an amazing impact on each family they encounter [...] We love and appreciate our workers and couldn't do life without them.

Participant



Community building and engagement

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Top three ways families initially connected with POWs



being involved in a neighbourhood group (41%)



a friend, neighbour, or family member connection (18.5%)



another community service I was using (12.7%)

“

One of the things that [my Parent Outreach Worker] is incredibly talented at is building community. [My Parent Outreach Worker] facilitates network building, which is something our society desperately needs. The systems we have now don't serve us as best they could.

“

“They [Parent Outreach Workers] also organize family-friendly events that bring everyone together, like holiday gatherings and educational workshops, which help build a strong sense of community. Their work has really made a difference in helping us feel more connected and supported.”



48.2% of participants were supported by their POW at least once a month

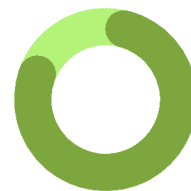
Since working with their POW...



84% of participants met new people in their neighbourhood



82% of participants agree their neighbours are more willing to help each other out



82% of participants feel safer in their neighbourhoods



79% of participants felt enabled to participate in neighbourhood events





Access to basic needs

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Parent Outreach Workers frequently connect clients with services and organizations that provide access to basic needs.



food (i.e. The SEED, Guelph Food Bank)



clothing (i.e. Winter Jacket program)



recreation (i.e. Free to Grow program)



“ [My Parent Outreach Worker] helped me get my kids (3) into camp with free to grow which I would not be able to pay for myself and because of that they were able to do summer camp so I could work during the summer!

“ [My Parent Outreach Worker] was my total savior for my family for last Christmas. [My Parent Outreach Worker] has since given us backpacks for my child. [My Parent Outreach Worker] has also told me where to go to get food and extra help.

“

[My Parent Outreach Worker] delivers veggies right to my door as needed, [they] set me up with the local food bank to help ease some of the stress that comes along with this 40% inflation increase we've faced over the past 3 years here in Canada.



“

[My Parent Outreach Worker] connected me to food bank and the indigenous sovereignty food circle.

Since working with their POW...



89% of participants felt they could provide healthy food for their family



94% of participants felt it has been easier to get necessary school supplies for their children

“

[My Parent Outreach Worker] even guided me how to go about getting help for a boy two doors down who was in need of winter clothing.



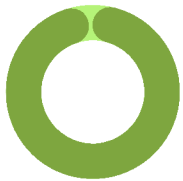


Awareness and navigation of formal services and supports

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POWs help clients access and use community services and supports:

- parenting classes
- tax clinics
- legal clinics
- mental health services
- veterinarian care
- housing services
- employment services



99% of participants reported their POW helped them access various supports.

POWs help clients develop the confidence and skills needed to navigate complex systems and advocate for themselves.



If not for [my Parent Outreach Worker] I would have never gotten over my anxieties of asking for help when I need it and knowing where to ask for help.



[My Parent Outreach Worker] is a fantastic source of information and support. [My Parent Outreach Worker] has provided supports for job hunting, food insecurity, school supplies and clothing in a non-judgmental and supportive way with so much genuine kindness.



95% of participants used services and supports they didn't know about or wouldn't have used before



...[My Parent Outreach Worker] has given me information on resources and met with me 1:1 to help fill out a report I was struggling with.



Family Functioning

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POWs strengthen family functioning by:



equipping parents with essential skills



helping to build stronger relationships



providing a foundation for positive child development



“

[My Parent Outreach Workers] shared information about free workshops on parenting and mental health, which have been really valuable for our family.

“

My outreach worker has been a strong source of support for me parenting and navigating life as a low income single mom.

“

Honestly without [my Parent Outreach Workers] I wouldn't have been able to do certain things with my children.

Since working with their POW...



92% of participants have a better idea of how to help their child(ren) when they are upset



92% of participants have more skills for helping their children learn and grow

POWs successfully guide adults in safe and responsive caregiving, which promotes healthy child development.

Since working with their POW...



96% of participants have been able to support a stable and responsive relationship with their child(ren)



85% of participants have strengthened their core life skills



81% of participants reduced sources of stress



*these outcomes support the three *Core Principles for Improving Child and Family Outcomes*, identified by the Harvard University Centre on the Developing Child