

# Port Cares & Social Determinants of Health

Exploring Port Cares and its initiatives to improve community and individual well-being through social determinants of health based services and programs



Programs  
Offered by  
Port Cares



Case Studies Highlighting Port Cares Impact



Challenges and  
Opportunities for  
Port Cares





# ABOUT PORT CARES

Port Cares is a community-based charitable organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life, health and well-being of individuals, families and community.

Since its founding in 1986, Port Cares has actively championed and addressed the social determinants of health -- such as economic stability, housing, food security, education - to foster a healthier and more equitable environment for all who live in south Niagara.





# ABOUT PORT CARES

Port Cares was founded by a group of local citizens in response to extensive and rapid job loss and subsequent economic and social decline in the late 1970's early 1980's. Service response included:

- Employment & Re-Training
- Literacy
- Domestic Violence Response
- Child Development & Parenting
- Housing
- Community Navigation







**PortCares**

## **VISION:**

A community where everyone has help, hope and opportunity

## **MISSION:**

Helping people in our community overcome barriers to build better lives

## **VALUES:**

- We provide help without judgement
- We are accountable to one another
- We treat everyone with respect
- We work collaboratively together
- We evolve by striving for excellence



# ABOUT PORT COLBORNE'S POPULATION

With respect to demographic characterization - it is important to understand that historically Port Colborne's population when compared to the rest of Niagara:

- Older
- Less educated - majority of population has highschool education as highest level
- Has higher levels of chronic illness
- Lower levels of income
- Has highest levels of non-employment based income (reliance on OAS, OW, ODSP, WISB) per capita
- Highest level of need for core housing
- High level of reliance on food bank supports - now one in 11



## Housing

Safe, affordable, adequate housing is a fundamental determinant of health.

Port Cares provides homelessness prevention services, eviction prevention, utility relief, housing supports and affordable housing.

Chestnut Place opened in March 2023 - is owned and operated by Port Cares and is fully paid for - 41 unit Rent Geared to Income units for low income seniors and female led single parent families with children.



## Food Security

Lack of access to adequate and nutritious food can negatively impact health.

Port Cares operates a large charity funded and volunteer supported food bank assisting one in 11 local residents - food bank, hampers, meal, lunches for school age children +\*\*\*

More than a food bank



## Income & Social Status

Higher levels of income and social status are associated with better health outcomes.

Poverty stigma is a barrier to upward social mobility - familial generational poverty is extensive in Port Colborne

Port Cares assists individuals & families with securing emergency income and supports OAS, OAC, ODSP and employment - we provide skills upgrading and work placements as well as entry into apprenticeship and training.



## Education

Education contributes to health literacy, enabling individuals to make informed health decisions. Higher educational attainment is often linked to better health outcomes.

Port Cares provides literacy, employment search, employment training and certifications as well as on the job training.



## Early Childhood Development

Experiences during early childhood - infancy to age 6 - shape brain, physical, emotional and social development that impact health and well-being through life.

Port Cares has from its beginnings to today provided high quality play based child development through its Family Centres located in Port Colborne, Fort Erie, Welland, Fonthill, Lincoln and West Lincoln - largest EarlyON provider in Niagara - specialized programs and drop-in services.



## Social Supports and Coping Skills

Strong social networks and the ability to cope with stress are associated with positive health outcomes.

Port Cares has provided crisis intervention and community navigation services for 20+ years serving men and women for individuals and families coping or in crisis.

By providing community based activities Port Cares has created a sense of belonging and decreased social isolation for vulnerable individuals and families.



## Health Services

Access to responsive and quality healthcare services is essential to maintaining and improving health.

To address the lack of access to health and mental health services, through partnership with REACH Niagara and Bridge, Port Cares facilitated the provision of weekly mobile health services for marginalized residents - started during the pandemic and continues as one of the busiest clinics in the region.



# Understanding what Port Cares does through a Social Determinants of Health Lens



# Income & Social Status

Higher levels of income and social status are associated with better health outcomes

Poverty stigma is a barrier to upward social mobility - familial generational poverty is extensive in Port Colborne

Port Cares assists individuals & families with securing emergency income and supports (OAS, OW, ODSP and employment - we provide skills upgrading and work placements as well as entry into apprenticeship and training



# Education

Education contributes to health literacy, enabling individuals to make informed health decisions. Higher educational attainment is often linked to better health outcomes.

Port Cares provides literacy, employment search, employment training and certifications as well as on the job training.

**Quick Tips Tuesday**

**pcWORKS**  
BRIDGING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**Certificates That Set You Apart**

- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) 
- Working at Heights Certification 
- Forklift Operator Certification 
- Safe Food Handling Certification 

Ready to level up your skills?  
Contact Us  
(905) 834-3629 ext 227  
[pcworks@portcares.ca](mailto:pcworks@portcares.ca)

**Canada**  **EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO** **Ontario** 





# Early Childhood Development

Experiences during early childhood - infancy to age 6 - shape brain, physical, emotional and social development that impact health and well-being through life.

Port Cares has from its beginnings to today provided high quality play based child development through its Family Centres located in Port Colborne, Fort Erie, Welland, Fonthill, Lincoln and West Lincoln - largest EarlyON provider in Niagara - specialized programs and drop-in services





# Social Supports and Coping Skills

Strong social networks and the ability to cope with stress are associated with positive health outcomes.

Port Cares has provided crisis intervention and community navigation services for 20+ years securing treatment and referrals for individuals and families nearing or in crisis.

By providing community based activities Port Cares has created a sense of belonging and disrupted social isolation for vulnerable individuals and families.





# Health Services

Access to responsive and quality healthcare services is essential to maintaining and improving health.

To address the lack of access to health and mental health services, through partnership with REACH Niagara and Bridges, Port Cares facilitated the provision of weekly mobile health services for marginalized residents - started during the pandemic and continues as one of the busiest clinics in the region.





# Housing

Safe, affordable, adequate housing is a fundamental determinant of health.

Port Cares provides homelessness prevention services, eviction prevention, utility relief, housing supports and affordable housing.

Chestnut Place opened in March 2025 - is owned and operated by Port Cares and is fully paid for - 41 unit Rent Geared to Income units for low income seniors and female led single parent families with children.





# Food Security

Lack of access to adequate and nutritious food can negatively impact health.

Port Cares operates a large charity funded and volunteer supported food bank assisting one in 11 local residents - food bank, hampers, meal, lunches for school age children +++++

More than a food bank





# Challenges and Opportunities for Port Cares

Port Cares encounters key challenges including funding limitations and a need for enhanced community awareness of its services. These obstacles, however, offer potential for growth through partnerships and innovative solutions.





# Future Directions for Port Cares

Strategic initiatives to support community





# Empowering Community through Health Equity

Port Cares is essential in fostering a healthier community by addressing the social determinants of health that impact individuals and families. Engaging with Port Cares not only enhances service delivery but also promotes a collective effort towards greater health equity.





# Port Cares & Social Determinants of Health

Exploring Port Cares and its initiatives to improve community and individual well-being through social determinants of health based services and programs



Programs  
Offered by  
Port Cares



Case Studies Highlighting Port Cares Impact



Challenges and  
Opportunities for  
Port Cares

