Catalyst Reading Week 2022

Guelph: Opioid Crisis and Community Care

The opioid crisis is worsening in many communities across the country, including Guelph, at an alarming rate. Between 2020 & 2021, fatalities increased by 242% in the Guelph Wellington-Dufferin counties. In 2020, 2600 lives were lost in Ontario. Myths and misunderstandings about opioids run rampant in our society as those who are dependent on opioids or receiving treatment are widely stigmatized.

In partnership with local community members and agencies, you will learn about the complex issues, lived experiences, and community supports associated with the ongoing opioid epidemic, substance use & modern harm reduction practices. Over the course of the program, you will explore topics including substance use, stigma, harm reduction, community care, mutual aid & peer support initiatives, health including mental health, housing, poverty, the law and de/criminalization.

Activities include immersive community-engaged learning with community support workers and social change agencies through dialogue, workshops, site visits and trainings to address the ongoing epidemic.

PARTICIPATION CRITERIA: Able to commit to full length of program. Open to students of all academic backgrounds.

KEY DATES:

- Catalyst Kick-Off: Saturday, January 22, 2022, 9:30-4:30, on-campus
- Reading Week: Monday, February, Feb 21, 2022 – Friday, Feb 25, 2022 (5 Days)
- Catalyst Reflection Event: Thursday, March 10, 5-7pm

PROGRAM TEAM: 10-15 Student Participants, 2-3 Team Leaders

LOCATION: Guelph

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

Students will...

- Understand and engage with the complexities of the ongoing opioid crisis in Guelph and across the country
- Engage with modern harm reduction and community care/mutual aid programs & workers addressing the ongoing opioid epidemic in Guelph
• Explore allyship & actionable steps to address equity issues related to the crisis

**COMMITMENT:**

**Pre-Reading Week:**

• Catalyst Kick-Off Day: Saturday, January 22, 2022, 9:30-4:30pm, in-person, on-campus, day-long orientation to Catalyst program, team-building & exploration of program topics/themes
• Team Meetings: your team will meet in-person or virtually twice to build connection and prepare for the program
• Engagement on MS Teams channel until program start to keep up with program updates, encourage teamwork, and support group and individual learning

**During Reading Week:**

• 5 full days of immersive community-based experiential learning in Guelph, in partnership with local community agencies addressing opioid crisis.
• **Activities include** meeting with local harm reduction and peer support workers, naloxone training, site visits to community agencies & local safer consumption sites, workshops on drugs, substance use, social issues, and stigma

**Post-Reading Week:**

• Catalyst Post-Reading Week Meet-up, Knowledge Share/Social – mid March
• Explore and engage in ongoing learning and allyship addressing the opioid crisis

**TIMELINE:**

**Tuesday, December 7, 2021:** Applications close

**December 8-10, 2021:** Online group interviews

**Week of Dec 13, 2021:** Selected applicants notified

**Saturday, January 22, 2022:** Catalyst Reading Week Orientation

Introduction to Student Participants & Team Leaders, review of program, team-building and preparation for program activities
Early February: Team meets twice virtually (1.5 hours x 2), evening meetings to prepare for Reading Week begin, time/date to be confirmed

February 21, 2022 (Monday): Catalyst: Opioid Crisis and Community Care Reading Week Program begins

February 25, 2022 (Friday): Reading Week Program Ends

Week of March 7th, 2022: Catalyst Post-Program Meet-up, Knowledge Share/Social


Included in cost: Fee contributes towards costs of planning and running program, including renting accessible space, financially acknowledging the expertise of community organizations and facilitators, lunches and snacks every day during Reading Week, team resources and supplies, food at Catalyst training and reflection, and special transportation needs.

Not included in cost: Students must take care of their own accommodation and transportation to and from program location (accessible by city bus route).

ACCESSIBILITY:

This program will take place mainly in downtown Guelph. There will be accessible entrances and elevators at our meeting site. Please contact us if you have any accessibility considerations we can address (including financial barriers) that would support your learning.