



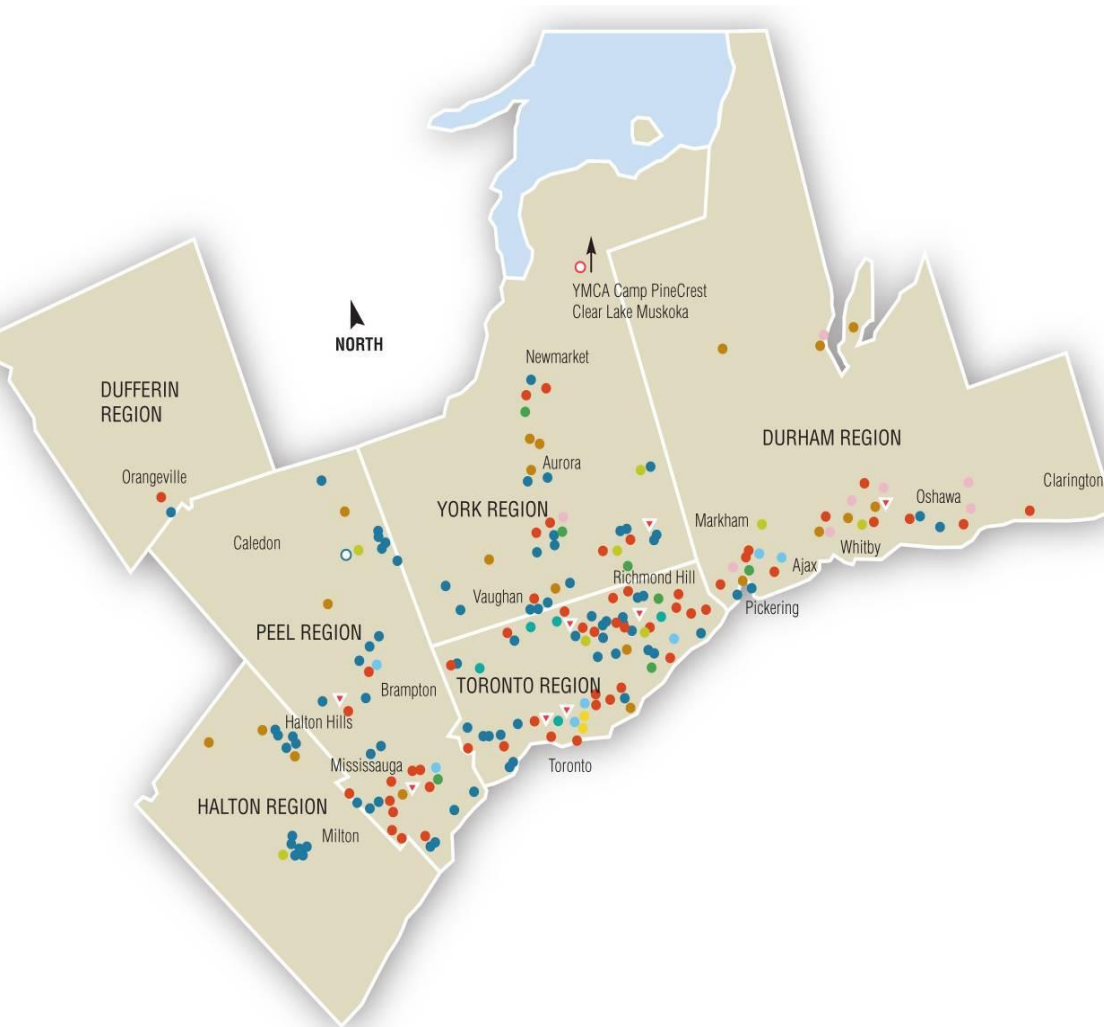
Three Simple Ideas for Improving Community Health

**Medhat Mahdy, President & CEO
YMCA of Greater Toronto**

*Building healthy
communities*



A belief that we were uniquely positioned to act



More than **375** locations across the GTA, offering a wide variety of **health promoting** programs

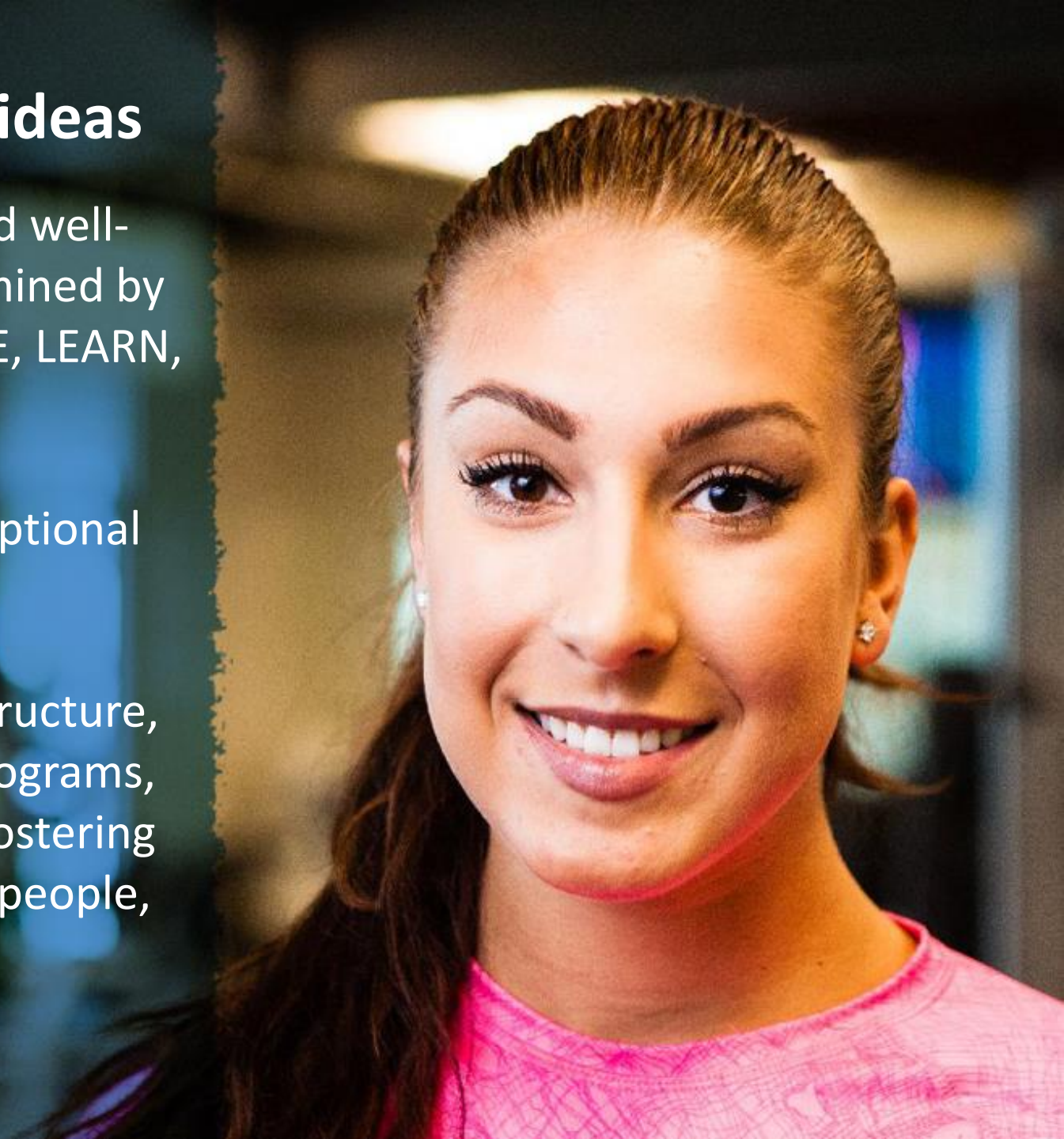
- 268 Child Care Centres (and growing)
- 8 Health and Fitness Centres
- 17 Youth Leader Program Sites
- 12 Immigrant Services Centres
- 27 Camping and Outdoor Education
- 16 Employment Centres

... and so much more



Three simple ideas

1. Your health and well-being is determined by where you LIVE, LEARN, WORK, & PLAY
2. Health an exceptional investment
3. Healthy infrastructure, and healthy programs, are critical to fostering healthy young people, and healthy communities



***Our Strong Start,
Great Future vision***

*Imagine a GTA
where our
communities are
home to the
healthiest children,
teens and young
adults*



The Social Determinants of Health

- Income and income distribution
- Education
- Unemployment and job security
- Employment and working conditions
- Early childhood development
- Food insecurity
- Housing
- Social exclusion
- Social safety networks
- Health services
- Aboriginal status
- Gender
- Race
- Disability
- Personal health practices and coping skills
- Healthy child development
- Biology and genetic endowment



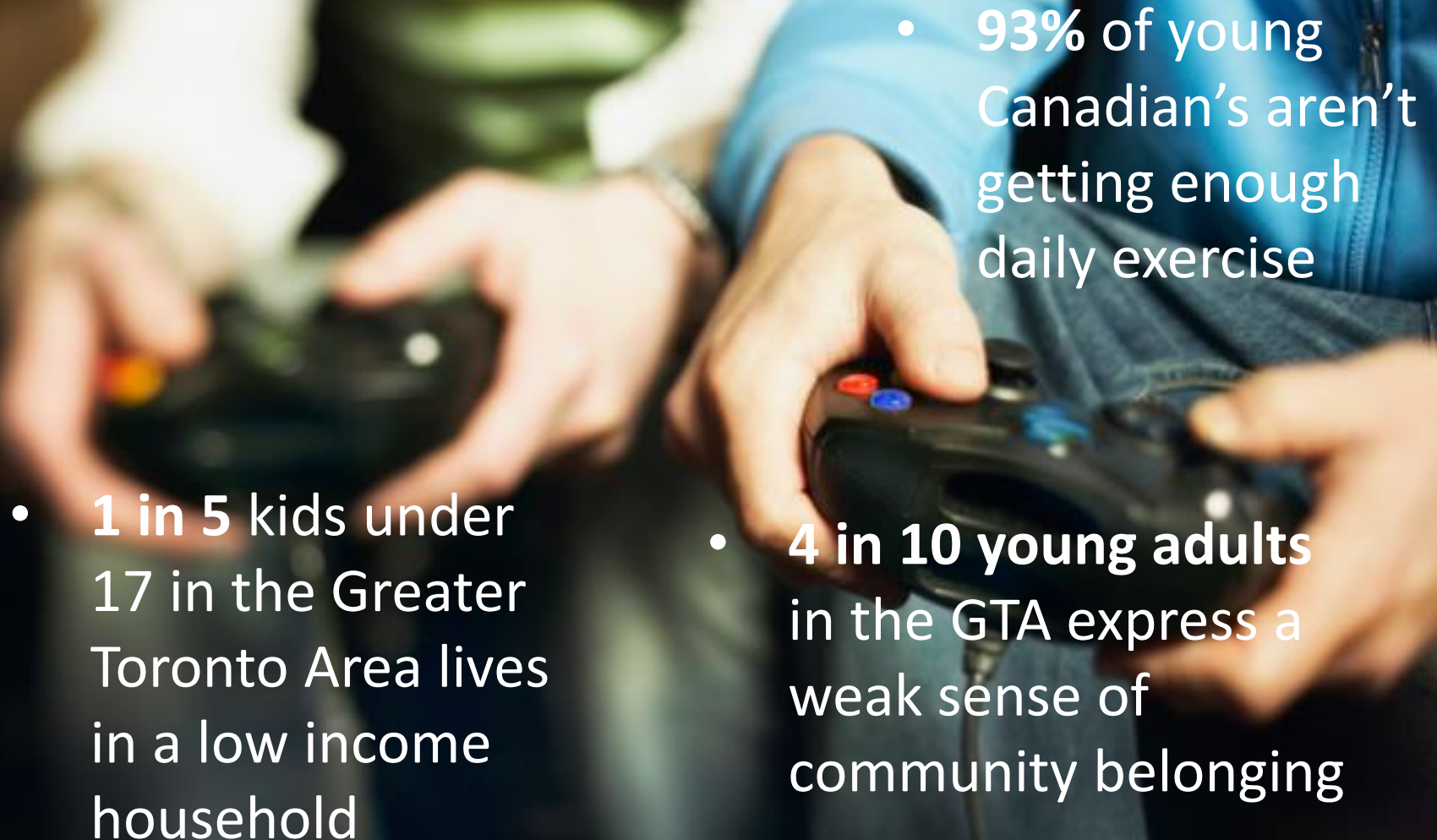
Why Emphasize Social Determinants?

- Social determinants of health have a direct impact on health
- Social determinants predict the greatest proportion of health status variance
- Social determinants of health structure health behaviours
- Social determinants of health interact with each other to produce health

– Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts
(Mikkonen, J., & Raphael, D.)



An evidence base that young people's health was set to continue to decline

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- A close-up photograph of two young people's hands holding black video game controllers. The person on the right is wearing a blue jacket, and the person on the left is wearing a green and white striped shirt. The background is blurred, focusing attention on the hands and controllers.
- 93% of young Canadian's aren't getting enough daily exercise
 - 1 in 5 kids under 17 in the Greater Toronto Area lives in a low income household
 - 4 in 10 young adults in the GTA express a weak sense of community belonging

Now Open: Vanauley Street YMCA Centre



Hope, Dignity, Safety, Respect



Fear: health system unsustainability



Reality: upstream investments in health are smart investments

thestar.com

News / GTA

Doctors at St. Mike's launch project to address root causes of poor health

Do health and wealth go together? Doctors at St Michael's hospital think so and have launched an innovative project to address the root causes of poor health



SARA MOJTEHEDZADEH / TORONTO STAR

Dr. Gary Bloch, Karen Tomlinson, and Dr. Andrew Pinto are part of an innovative project at St. Michael's hospital in Toronto to prescribe patients income security, after seeing the negative impact of poverty, financial stress, and precarious w

By: [Sara Mojtehedzadeh](#) Work and Wealth reporter, Published on Sun Dec 14 2014

Any patient hopes a doctor's appointment will help them get back to feeling like a million bucks. Few expect to leave with real money in the bank.

But that's exactly what an innovative project at St. Michael's Hospital in downtown Toronto is trying to do.

It's based on compelling evidence that health and wealth go together. Studies show that illnesses such as diabetes are twice as common in Ontario's poorest households. Cardiovascular disease is 17 per cent higher in low-income Canadians. Cancer, arthritis, and asthma are all more common amongst the poor.

Research suggests that chronic stress, often caused by financial strain, can even impact our very biology.

Now, a team of family health doctors is taking action — in a program that [Dr. Gary Bloch](#) says is possibly the first of its kind in North America.

Launching his career at St. Mike's roughly a decade ago, Bloch witnessed first hand the crippling effects of poverty on the body. He soon realized medical interventions often weren't enough to treat many of those patients. Traditionally, doctors saw the social and economic currents buffeting their patients' lives as beyond their remit.

"That's the piece that I really wanted to challenge," he says.

**Upstream investments bring vibrancy to our communities,
promoting a strong start now to avoid ill health later**



Healthy infrastructure promotes health for all



We can't do it alone – we need your help



Thank you / Questions

For more information, please visit our **Strong Start, Great Future** campaign website:

ymcagta.org/StrongStartGreatFuture

