

## **World Hepatitis Day in Ottawa: Youth agency urges youth to get tested and be aware**

Ottawa, July 23, 2012—In honour of World Hepatitis Day the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa (YSB) will host a carnival-themed event to raise awareness in a youth-friendly environment. The Youth Services Bureau's Hepatitis C education team works year-round with youth peer-to-peer educators to increase knowledge of hepatitis, remove stigma, and reduce barriers for testing and treatment.

"This day is both about raising awareness and having fun together. We want to create a celebratory, memorable event that people are excited to attend and will help keep the conversation going year-round" says Suzy Yim, YSB's Hepatitis C Prevention Educator. Hepatitis C is a common, treatable virus that impacts the liver. 1 in 12 Canadians live with Hepatitis C; it is estimated that over 20% don't know they have it.

"We know that street-involved youth are at greater risk for infection, but anyone can get Hep C. We want Ottawans to be better informed about the virus," says Yim.

Hepatitis C is transmitted through blood; some ways to contract the virus are through the sharing of needles, nail clippers or razors, as well as improperly sterilized tattoo or piercing equipment, adds Yim.

The event will also launch **safer piercing kits** in conjunction with the Ottawa Public Health.

The carnival-themed event takes place at YSB's Downtown Drop-in on Tuesday, **July 24** from 1 – 5 PM:

- **1 PM** Activities led by YSB 2:00 pm BBQ and cotton candy
- **3:30 – 4:30 PM** Activities led by YSB and local anti-bullying organization Jer's Vision and raffle prizes
- **1 – 5 PM** Dunk Tank: Youth will have opportunities to dunk YSB staff!

### **About the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa**

Founded in 1960, the **Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa (YSB)** is one of the largest and most comprehensive non-profit agencies serving youth in Ottawa and is a registered charity. YSB offers over 30 programs and serves 3,000 youth and families every month in the areas of youth engagement, housing and homelessness, mental health, youth justice and employment.

-30-

Media contacts:

Lina Harper  
Communications Officer, YSB  
613-729-0577 x 1206