

Safer Community Committee Biographies

All biographies are presented as they were submitted by the individual committee member.

Community Members

Meaghan C. – resigned October 4, 2023.

I've been an active community member in Leslieville for over 10 years and I have two children who attend a local school. Community safety for everyone in our neighbourhood is a priority for me and it's why I volunteered my time.

Nigel Fick – No biography provided – resigned October 4, 2023.

Derek Finkle – resigned October 4, 2023.

Derek Finkle has lived on Heward Avenue across from the SRCHC with his wife and son for fourteen years. Derek is an award-winning journalist who has reported extensively on police issues, including in his book, *No Claim to Mercy*, which played a significant role in undoing the wrongful murder conviction of Robert Baltovich, who spent ten years in prison. Derek and numerous other residents on Heward Avenue have been expressing their very serious safety concerns related to the outdoor drug emporium that has been cultivated just outside of the SRCHC, less than 100 meters from approximately one thousand children who attend schools and daycares nearby, for many years. The SRCHC willfully ignored those concerns – until July 7, 2023, when an innocent mother of two was shot and killed as a result of violence within the drug den, involving a dealer known to local residents, including Derek, a tragic event the residents predicted would occur in a meeting with the SRCHC CEO three days earlier. Since July 7th, Derek has observed that the SRCHC has been involved in a very calculated and expensive damage control campaign, of which this Safer Community Committee is part, intended to rehabilitate the SRCHC's image above all else.

Emily Hill

Emily Hill has lived in Leslieville for 12 years and is starting her 4th year on the SRCHC Board of Directors. She is a Senior Staff Lawyer at Aboriginal Legal Services. From 2020 to 2022, she was Senior Commission Counsel for the Mass Casualty Commission, a national public inquiry which, among other aspects of its mandate, made recommendations to improve community safety following Canada's largest mass shooting in Nova Scotia in 2020.

Rebecca Ho

Rebecca (she/her) has been living in South Riverdale with her family for over 15 years and is proud to be a member of this community, serving as a Director of the South Riverdale CHC Board. This is Rebecca's third year on the SRCHC Board and she was recently appointed to the role of Vice-Chair. Rebecca holds a Masters of Applied Science from the University of Toronto and a Masters of Health Administration from the Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

Aparna Kajenthira

Aparna Kajenthira (pronouns she/her) is a racialized settler who arrived on this land as a child with her family. Currently, she is the Sr. Manager of Health Equity and Community Engagement at SickKids Centre for Community Mental Health and proudly serves as a Board member at South Riverdale Community Health Centre. Aparna has an educational background in business administration and social work and has spent the past 15 years working with and for youth in community health, mental health and philanthropic settings.

Gillian Kolla

Gillian Kolla lives a short walk from the South Riverdale Community Health Centre with her kids, who have received health services at the Centre since they were little. She is also a public health researcher who conducts research in both Ontario and BC on how to make health and social services more accessible to people who use drugs, and on drug policy responses to address the devastating loss of life from the North American overdose crisis. She holds Postdoctoral Research Fellowships at the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research at the University of Victoria and at the Centre for Drug Policy Evaluation at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. She has previously also partnered with South Riverdale Community Health Centre on research and evaluations of their harm reduction programs.

Ashley McPherson – No biography provided – resigned October 4, 2023

Andrea Nickel – No biography provided – resigned October 4, 2023

Edward Speicher

Edward Speicher was born and raised in South Riverdale before moving away for work. During his time spent living in Ottawa, he became closely involved with the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre, including support for a wide array of harm reduction services. A former Canadian Army mechanical engineering officer turned data scientist, Edward spent time living all over the country before finally returning home to Toronto in 2018. Since that time he has been proud to once more call South Riverdale home, living there with his wife and their two young daughters.

Mike Wilson

Mike has lived near SRCHC since 2010, has two children that attend Morse St. Public School, was elected to the SRCHC board in June 2018 and was board chair from June 2021-23. Mike received his PhD from the Health Research Methodology Program at McMaster in 2010, and continues to work at McMaster as Scientific Director of the McMaster Health Forum and as an Associate Professor in the Department of Health Evidence and Impact. In these roles his work focuses on synthesizing evidence and leading deliberative processes to support government policymakers, system and organizational leaders and citizens who are involved in making decisions about health and social systems.

Local business and service organizations

Naureen Choudhry

Naureen is the Director of Community Engagement at WoodGreen Community Services. She comes with an extensive background as stakeholder engagement practitioner in different settings. Prior to joining WoodGreen, she is proud of her stakeholder engagement work on social justice reforms at the Commission for Children and Young People followed by her contributions at the Department of Justice and Community Safety for the State Government of Victoria (in Australia). From simple to complex projects, Naureen specializes in designing tailored and responsive engagement strategies using IAP2 engagement principles. She also brings into the mix her skills in public speaking, networking and facilitating meetings to produce desired outcomes in engagement projects.

Laurence DeWolfe – resigned September 21, 2023.

(Rev. Dr.) Laurence DeWolfe, Interim Moderator (part-time) for Queen Street East Presbyterian Church. Retired pastor and seminary professor. My mandate at QSEPC is to ensure that worship, pastoral care, and governance continue while the congregation is without a minister. Also to assess present needs and assist in planning for the future, with focus on the future of the church property.

Jennifer Orenstein – resigned October 4, 2023

I am a Chartered Professional Accountant who works in a family business that has been in Leslieville for over 40 years. Joel Orenstein MBA CPA provides small business and individuals with accounting needs. I currently am the treasurer for Leslieville Business Improvement Association and a director at Toronto Association of Business Improvement Area.

Christiane Tetreault – No biography provided – resigned October 4, 2023.