

LAND-BASED HEALING | NATURE FOR HEALING

We are thrilled to bring you the first issue of our monthly newsletter. The Land-Based Healing | Nature for Healing program has rapidly expanded in many directions due to the overwhelming support and interest of our varied team members and community collaborators. Each month, we will highlight information that may be helpful for prescribers, useful resources, celebrate accomplishments of the team, highlight new aspects of the program, describe different research endeavors, and spotlight different team members and community partnerships. If you would like to be involved, or have an important story to tell or images to share, please reach out to the team!

All of the newsletters will be available on our [website](#).

What is Land-Based Healing | Nature for Healing?

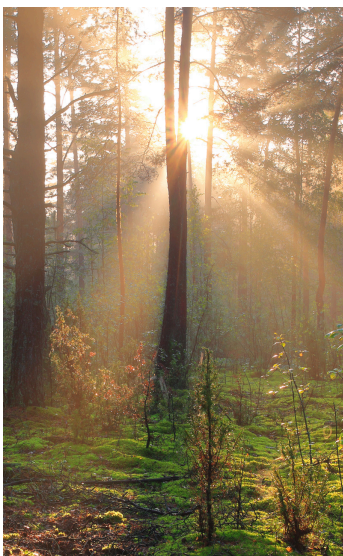
The program aims to enhance patient and family health and healing through increased exposure to nature, both inside and outside, through the use of **nature prescriptions** and the **creation of nature spaces**. Research has shown that connecting with nature has a variety of positive health benefits. Connecting with nature:

- Improves mental, emotional and physical health
- Improves mood, positive emotions, such as a sense of calm, and energy
- Decreases stress, pain and symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Decreases loneliness and increases feelings of connectedness to place and others
- Builds resilience



What are nature prescriptions? How do I prescribe nature?

Nature prescriptions are written prescriptions for connections with nature between a healthcare provider and a patient and their family. There is a Nature Therapy PowerPlan that can be used to prescribe nature for in- and out-patients. For more information on how to build a nature prescription and how to prescribe, please see the videos on [this webpage](#), where we also have suggestions for how to connect with nature and links to resources, such as medications and videos.



Land-Based Healing

Land-Based Healing | Nature for Healing is a two-eyed seeing approach to health and wellness, braiding traditional teachings, ways of knowing, and Land-Based Healing as knowledge that has been in practice since before settlers and colonization. Land-Based Healing is about reconnection to the land and central to our overall health and well-being. The land is central and lifegiving. The land sustains us in food, shelter, water, language, ceremony, medicine and so much more. The traditional territories on which we reside here in Kanata help us to understand more about the relationship between the original caretakers of the land and the impact of the land in our identity, health, and wellness.

The Youth Indigenous Wellness Program has been growing well this year. Chi-Miigwetch to the program participants and the weekly garden group who comes weekly to take care of the garden, sit in circle, and rest and connect with the nature we have at LHSC.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

In each newsletter, we will highlight the amazing work that is being done by inspiring community partners, friends, and connections. In the past year, we have been honoured to connect with many community partner organizations, individuals and leaders around Land, Nature, and Healing who we have met locally, regionally, and nationally. The following is a starting place, there will be much more to follow.

Nature Imaginarium - November 2023

This Imaginarium on Nature Prescriptions for Youth Well-being in London, Ontario was held with clinicians, researchers, students, and community members in the London area. Collaborators include London Health Sciences Centre (Children's Hospital, Children's Environmental Health Clinic) and Western University (Faculty of Health Sciences), and [MINDS of London-Middlesex](#). The Imaginarium concept is built on the principles of mindful social innovation, which was conceived by [The Global MINDS Collective](#) with [Dr. Arlene MacDougall](#). It is an approach that works towards self- and system-transformation for mental health and well-being.

This Imaginarium aimed to determine collective interest in promoting the health and well-being of youth through Land-Based Healing and nature prescriptions. This half-day event brought together patient and youth advocates, clinical, community, academic stakeholders and representatives from different Indigenous Nations. Bill Hill (Ronikonkatste), a member of the Turtle Clan, Mohawk Nation and Co-CEO of Noojimo Health, gave a powerful opening that inspired and ignited the connection, collaboration and conversation of the day.

The Imaginarium was funded by a Western as a Living Lab Planning Grant (PIs: Lesley Gittings, Anna Gunz, Nicole Yawney), with in-kind contributions from Land-Based Healing | Nature for Healing (Dr. Anna Gunz) and MINDS of London-Middlesex (Dr. Arlene MacDougall).

We want to thank all those involved and who we have connected with since. A special thank you to [Vala Gylfadottir](#) from the Middlesex London Ontario Health Team, for facilitating many of these connections! For more information, please see the [Imaginarium Report](#).



Outdoor Space Imagining and our Community Partnerships

We are incredibly grateful for all the support and interest we continue to receive to help us co-create and imagine an outdoor healing space. We wanted to thank Will Heeman and [Heeman's](#) for their ongoing support of our programs that aim to bring live plants indoors and outdoors at Children's Hospital. Jordan Buck, a Horticultural Therapy Practitioner in London, has been an incredible addition to our team! We want to thank the [London Environmental Network](#) for connecting, which gave us the spark to launch our [Outdoor Space Imagining Survey](#) and Art Show (please continue to send your feedback and art)! A special thanks to Tony DiGiovanni and Mike Hurley, and all the folks at [Trees for Life](#) and Shaquille Sealy from [Reforest London](#) for their incredible support and connections! Trees are life indeed, and we hope to create a healing space to reflect this! We are also thrilled to have [Bienenstock Playgrounds](#) join our team to help bring the Imaginings into life!

CELEBRATIONS AND SHOUT-OUTS

We want to thank all our committee members who have continued to support and promote this program!

Top Nature Prescribers for 2023-2024

We would like to recognize our top Nature Prescribers, by category, for 2023-2024:

- Pediatric Resident: **Dr. Ray (Helena) Woodhouse**
- Physician: **Dr. Michael Grattan**
- NP: **Margo Devries-Rizzo**
- RN Promotor: **Deanna Masterson**



We would also like to give some special shout-outs to:

- **Paige Mayerink** (NP in NICU) for her incredible work implementing and promoting the program in the NICU.
- **Bailey Felker and Deborah Dewbury Langley** (Child Life) for their ideas, efforts, inspiration, and energy.
- **Dr. Lesley Gittings** (Scientific Research Director) and her team (including **Nokuzola Ncube** and **Sophie Paquet**) for their inspiring work that is connecting us with the community and leading research that imbeds patient, family, youth, community, and healthcare provider voices in this work.

Thank you to everyone for your hard work and dedication!

Award Nominees

We are pleased to share that Nicole Yawney, Youth Indigenous Wellness Consultant, has been nominated for two prestigious awards, and has been invited to share a poster at the Children's Health Canada Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland, this October. Nicole has been nominated for the Ontario Health system Quality and Innovation awards in the category of improved Indigenous Health and for the Children's Health Canada Innovation and Impact Award for the programming she has initiated to advance the work of Truth and Reconciliation at Children's Hospital. Additionally, Nicole Yawney and Carol Fortnum have been invited to present a poster at the Children's Health Canada Conference where they will share the successful and innovative Youth Indigenous Career Fair that was held at Children's Hospital at LHSC in February 2024.



Nicole Yawney

The idea that embracing traditional knowledge and ways of learning is considered 'innovative' is one that is long overdue, and happily embraced. Nicole, along with the entire Indigenous Wellness program, including Land-Based Healing | Nature for Healing, continues to demonstrate that going back to the fundamentals of grounding ourselves in nature, connections, and relationships truly leads to improved quality of health and of social-emotional-mental well-being. Stay tuned for information about the next Youth Indigenous Career Fair. If you would like to be involved with planning and co-creating the event, please reach out to Nicole.Yawney@lhsc.on.ca or Carol.Fortnum@lhsc.on.ca.

Dr. Anna Gunz was incredibly honoured to be recognized on behalf of the work of the team with a nomination to the Champion of Mental Health and Addiction Awards 2024 in the individual category, presented by St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation in partnership with CMHA Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services.

SCATTERING SEEDS

We are very grateful to the many meetings, rounds, and conferences that members of our team have been invited to speak at about this work. We continue to build and gather existing resources that we collect on our [website](#). If you have suggestions for anything that you find useful or are excited about, please share so that we can expand the collection! Some highlights from our team's live presentations include a workshop presented by Nicole Yawney, Lesley Gittings, Shaquille Sealy (Reforest London) and Anna Gunz at the 4th Annual Canadian Children, Youth and Communities Health In Equity Conference (October 2024).



Nicole and Anna also had the opportunity to speak to child life specialists from across Canada at their annual meeting, as well as the folks from [Campfire Circle](#) this spring at their annual meeting. We have also had the opportunity to speak at the Department of Pediatrics Grand Rounds, and have given many informal and formal sessions for different programs around Children's Hospital and Women's Care. Nicole and Anna were delighted to join the Child Inpatient Pain Service (ChIPS) for a nature breakfast to learn about their program and be inspired by their enthusiasm to weave nature into their work (pictured above)!

RESEARCH REPORT



Dr. Lesley Gittings

The research arm of the Land-Based Healing | Nature for Healing initiative explores pressing environmental health issues facing children and young people, alongside nature-based interventions to support health and wellbeing. We are excited to introduce our Research Director, Dr. Lesley Gittings, Assistant Professor at Western University and head of the Health of People and the Environment (HOPE Lab). In each newsletter we will provide updates of recognitions, collaborations and research studies and findings. If any of this sparks your interest and/or you would like to be involved, please reach out!

Canadian Medical Student Research Competition & Child Health Research Day

Heather Schwartz-Narbonne, a 4th-year medical student at Western University Windsor Campus, presented her work on the risk of ingesting chemical contaminants in urban snow at the Canadian Medical Student Research Competition and was one of the opening plenary lectures at the 2024 Child Health Research Day in London.



Dr. Anna Gunz and Heather Schwartz-Narbonne

Child Health Symposium

Five Land-Based Healing | Nature for Healing team members (Sophie Paquet, Nokuzola Ncube, Olivia D'Andrea Brooks, and Rubiga Thanganathan, Lesley Gittings) delivered oral presentations at the Child Health Symposium: The Power of Client and Family Engagement at Victoria Hospital, London, Ontario on May 28th, 2024. This symposium was a collaborative presentation of Western University's Faculty of Health Sciences and TVCC to provide an opportunity to share knowledge, practices, research, and to build relationships with collaborators in the community.



Second from left: Dr. Anna Gunz, Rubiga Thanganathan, Dr. Lesley Gittings, Nokuzola Ncube, Olivia D'Andrea Brooks, Sophie Paquet

Undergraduate students Sophie Paquet, Olivia D'Andrea Brooks, and Rubiga Thanganathan showcased and presented their research projects as part of Land-Based Healing | Nature for Healing program, Sophie Paquet delivered an oral presentation titled, "The barriers and facilitators to implementing nature prescription programs for child and youth health: A scoping review." which explored and shared barriers and facilitators to nature prescription programs, and drew meaningful conclusions that can be used to strengthen currently-implemented nature prescription programs.

Olivia D'Andrea Brooks and Rubiga Thanganathan each delivered an oral presentation based on findings from their study on the Western University community garden. Olivia's presentation titled, "Campus community gardens as a nature-based health intervention for Canadian university students," explored the garden as a community nature-based intervention for student well-being. Rubiga examined the community garden and its relationship with environmental self-efficacy in a presentation titled, "Green mind, green campus: Enhancing environmental self-efficacy through community gardening at Western University." These findings have been used to inform community garden programming at Western University in support of the garden project and student, community, faculty, and staff wellness.

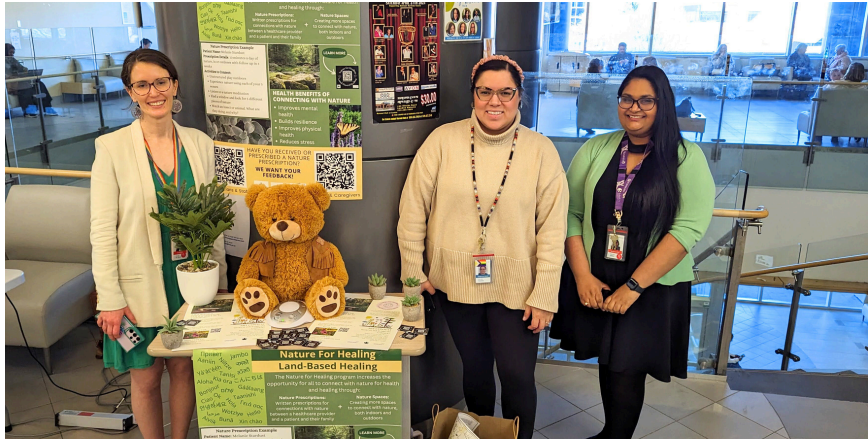
Congratulations to the Land-Based Healing | Nature for Healing team's efforts and presentations at this event!

RECENT EVENTS AND UPDATES

Natural Spaces Update

We are working to create more natural spaces around the hospital, both indoors and outdoors. We are currently buying items that will help to bring nature indoors for our patients who are unable to go outside. If there are any specific items that you would like to have or wish to donate, please email us at chehc@lhsc.on.ca.

We are also imagining an outdoor nature-space at the hospital for patients, families and staff to heal, find joy, and play. We want to design this space together to ensure it meets the needs of everyone who might use it. We are collecting feedback via a survey as well as an art contest! For more information on how you can participate, please see this [webpage](#).



Dr. Anna Gunz, Nicole Yawney, and Ashley Jokhu

Earth Day Reflection

It was a thrill to be present at the Earth Day fair this year! Thank you to everyone who stopped by! We have been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of everyone involved, as well as those who wish to learn about the program. We constantly reflect on how unique it is to be involved in something overwhelmingly positive in the hospital, and we are grateful to all who are carrying the program!

TO OUR DONORS & CHILDREN'S HEALTH FOUNDATION

It goes without saying that all of this work has been possible due to your incredible generosity and support. It has been an incredibly positive and moving experience to be part of this program. We have heard many stories about the impact of nature on healing from patients, care givers, families, staff, and physicians that stems from personal, family, and professional experience. Seeing the joy on peoples' faces, the way they breath in and engage around nature brings warmth to our hearts and a gratitude for these moments of humanity that we weave in through our day. The impact of your generosity lies far beyond that which we can easily express in words. Thank you!

CONTACT US

We want your feedback!

Have you received or prescribed nature? If so, please consider filling out the feedback survey below by scanning the QR code or clicking on the underlined sections. Your feedback is important and helps us to improve the program!



[Physicians & Staff](#)



[Patients & Caregivers](#)

Contact Us



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Children's Environmental Health Clinic Ontario (ChEHC ON)

