

PAMA exhibit examines unstable employment and its effects

It's a first for the Peel Art Gallery, Museum, and Archives (PAMA).

Wanted: A Full-time Job with Benefits / Stable Jobs = Stable Communities is an exhibition with a strong social message. It features photographs and personal stories shared by individuals and families from Peel who are struggling to make ends meet. The temporary exhibition runs until Oct. 27.

Inspiration for this exhibition came from photographs and stories told by Peel residents who participated in PhotoVoice, part of an on-going research study, covering the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton, called Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario (PEPSO). The study explored how unstable, poorly-paid or precarious employment is changing key social relations; and the potential impacts on neighbourhoods. The local research for this study is supported by the Region of Peel and United Way of Peel. "We are a forum for discussion about the issues that affect our communities," explained Acting PAMA Manager Marty Brent. "This exhibition brings first-hand realities of precarious employment into focus, and makes us think, examine issues, and consider what we, as individuals, can do to inspire change."

PAMA reports that precarious employment is increasing. Only 60 per cent of GTA workers today have stable, secure jobs. It's not an isolated issue. Today, few people can expect to work for a single employer for their entire career, as they did 50 years ago. "This exhibition has something for everyone," Brent observed. "It resonates with people who are not employed full-time, or may earn a low wage."

"It provides employers and business owners with insights into the lives of those they employ," he added. "Most of all, it offers families an opportunity to openly discuss a modern reality that is found in every community today, and together determine how they can make Peel Region liveable for all residents."

Findings from the PEPSO study will help to inform advocacy and public policy efforts by community organizations, advocacy networks, and multi-sector committees such as the Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Operated by the Region of Peel, PAMA is at 9 Wellington St. E. in Brampton. Visit pama.peelregion.ca for more information.