



Festival of Neighbourhoods ✿ Kitchener ✿

Kitchener Festival of Neighbourhoods QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. What is the Festival of Neighbourhoods?

The initiative started in 1994 to encourage Kitchener residents to build stronger relationships with each other through gatherings, activities and events. The Festival of Neighbourhoods founding partners are the City of Kitchener, Social Planning Council of Kitchener-Waterloo, and John MacDonald Architect. They have been rallying support, resources and champions to sustain this unique initiative.

The coordination of the Kitchener's Festival of Neighbourhoods is supported by the Social Development Centre Waterloo Region who participates as well in the working committees with the two other partner organizations. It used to be a summer project until 2010 – called the Festival Season. Currently, it is run all year round - from October 1 to September 30. The neighbourhoods register their activities organized in that period to be eligible for annual prizes and awards at the Finale Celebration.

All registrations must be received by midnight of October 5th each year!

The Festival of Neighbourhoods focuses on geographic neighbourhoods, no matter how big or small. As you are the center of your neighbourhood, you decide what the boundaries are and you make it possible for everyone who lives within these boundaries to get to know each other. All activities that bring neighbours together are precious, but only some are truly inclusive

Festival of Neighbourhoods activities:

- Activity is organized for a **specific geographic area** or a neighbourhood that organizers define for themselves
- Organizers make intentional effort to make an activity **welcoming to and inclusive of everyone** who lives in that geographic area
- There are different **opportunities for face-to-face interaction** among neighbours during the activity so they can get to know each other better

Festival of Neighbourhoods does not organize activities in the neighbourhoods! Our objectives are:

1. to see as many neighbourhoods come to life across the city by helping with outreach activities and organizing neighbourhood blitzes in the areas where neighbours need a gentle nudge to start coming together;
2. to connect to as many neighbourhood groups as possible and establish lasting relationships through the registration process that helps share inspiring stories;
3. to increase the diversity of neighbourhoods joining the Festival by celebrating the special character and inclusive nature of activities organized in different parts of the city throughout ongoing campaign and at the annual celebration and award ceremony.

You find ways to connect your neighbours and we find ways to support you with resources, suggestions, ideas, collaboration and knowledge sharing. This are some of the specific tools and activities that the Festival partners created to support you:

- Tips and resources how to bring neighbourhoods together
- Neighbourhood Activity Guide: ideas and tools for activity organizing
- Awards and prizes, gifts and donations
- Neighbourhood Activity Trunk with toys and games you can borrow
- Festival Activities Map and Calendar
- Participating in outreach activities in your neighbourhood
- Sharing stories about your neighbourhood and promoting your activities on social media, in our E-Neighbour newsletter and newspapers
- Annual Festival Finale Celebration and Awards
- Capital Investment Grants from the City of Kitchener
- Connections to other initiatives such as Jane's Walk or Earth Day Cleanups
- Leadership Group knowledge sharing to bring more supports to neighbourhoods

2. How can I contact the Festival of Neighbourhoods?

Visit us at 74 Frederick St. in Kitchener if you happen to be in the **neighbourhood**. We would love to show you around and learn more about your neighbourhood.

Visit us, call us, email us, write us a letter or connect on social media!

Phone: 519-579-3800

E-mail: entries@festivalofneighbourhoods.ca

Fax: 519-578-9185

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

Mailing Address:

Festival of Neighbourhoods

c/o Social Development Centre WR

74 Frederick St. Kitchener, ON N2H 2M2

Follow us and share what goes on in your neighbourhood at [@FONKitchener](https://twitter.com/FONKitchener) on Twitter. Like our page, comment and share with [Kitchener's Festival of Neighbourhoods](https://www.facebook.com/Kitchener's-Festival-of-Neighbourhoods) on Facebook. Add our email address entries@festivalofneighbourhoods.ca to your mailing lists and [subscribe to our E-Neighbour](#) to receive bi-monthly news and tips!

3. How will Festival of Neighbourhoods benefit my neighbourhood?

By bringing your neighbours together, you help build relationships and capacity which will help foster a healthier, safer, and more engaged community for everyone! It is proven that the closer the relationships between neighbours are, the greater the wellbeing is for everyone.

In addition to the tools and activities we have developed to help you bring the neighbourhood together, here are additional benefits and supports that would improve your neighbourhood:

- The Festival recognizes neighbourhoods at the annual awards ceremony and makes sure your generous and spirited initiatives are known and recognized across the city.

- The Social Development Centre Waterloo Region can offer planning and engagement support if your neighbours want to work on improvement of social conditions or on a specific neighbourhood initiative.
- The City of Kitchener has been offering annual capital investment grants for improvement of the physical infrastructure in neighbourhoods.
- John MacDonald Architects would, together with the appropriate city departments, guide you in the planning process for a specific neighbourhood improvement project you chose for the capital investment grant.

4. How do I define my neighbourhood?

“Each of us is the centre of our neighbourhood.” What a concept!

Start by defining **your** *neighbourhood*. A common way to do this is by choosing street boundaries, or, if you live in an apartment, your *neighbourhood* could be your building.

You can look around you and ask yourself: where are the familiar people, what are the familiar places and what are the regular activities you do in your immediate area. What is your home out of home where you feel comfortable and where you feel you have an impact? Your neighbourhood will probably be small, less than 200 homes.

There are many ways to define neighbourhoods. If you are a member of a neighbourhood association, your view can be much broader and potentially encompass the neighbourhood association area, the whole ward or an even wider area of the city because your association has activities and impact in a wider geography. However, the larger your neighbourhood is, the more difficult it is to reach out and connect to all the neighbours who live there.

Because there are so many ways to define a neighbourhood, we expect them to be nesting & overlapping across the city. We encourage you to choose the scale you are most comfortable with and to try to get to know everyone who lives in your neighbourhood.

The main thing to remember is that once you choose your *neighbourhood* boundaries, your activity must be promoted to and be welcoming to all who live within those boundaries.

5. What activities are eligible to be registered?

To be eligible for registration with the Festival of Neighbourhoods, a *neighbourhood* must hold a gathering that:

1. clearly defines the boundaries of a neighbourhood,
2. is open and welcoming to everyone who lives in that *neighbourhood*,
3. brings people face-to-face and
4. includes intentional efforts to be as inclusive as possible across diversity (age, ability, culture, language, socio-economic status, habits, interests and custom, etc.).

If an activity is led by an organization such as a church, a school, or a community group, it is eligible if hosted for people who live within a specific geographical area defined as the

neighbourhood and if there is an effort to reach and welcome everyone who lives in that geographic area. Some activities may be advertised to people outside the *neighbourhood* as long as the immediate area is being defined and all the residents in that area invited.

Businesses can host festival activities when they invite other businesses and organizations to come together in a building or on a street to get to know each other while promoting their products and services.

However, there are many neighbourhood groups and associations who host myriad of special events and gatherings focusing on other things than a specific geographical area. Some are for children or for youth, some for seniors, parents and tots, people who like photography or baking. They are all growing organically based on interests and needs in a community and make for stronger connections among people. However, those who make efforts to bring neighbours together across difference, different interests and cultures, different ages and life stages, families and singles, professionals and blue color workers – just because they live in the same neighbourhood are true Festival of Neighbourhoods activities.

6. What awards could my neighbourhood be eligible for?

A neighbourhood must complete **two steps** in order to receive ballots for the draws or to be considered for awards:

1. **Register at least an eligible gathering in a season, and**
2. **Attend the Festival Finale.**

Awards of recognition are presented at the Finale based on the criteria found below. For each award, recipients will be chosen from a list of eligible registrations by either the Awards Committee or the Award Sponsor. The details about your event from the registration will determine your eligibility for these awards, and you must be present at the Finale to receive them.

- **Neighbourhood Newcomer Award:** The award is given to a neighbourhood that has registered an event for the first time. The FoN team determines which neighbourhoods have registered for the first time and those with representation at the finale are entered into a random **draw** for the winner.
- **Neighbourhood Pillar Award:** Given to a neighbourhood that has registered for five or more consecutive years (the activity itself need not be the same each year). The FoN team determines which neighbourhoods are eligible and those with representation at the finale are entered into a random **draw** for the winner.
- **Arts & Culture Award:** Given to a neighbourhood group who has included the arts in their activity as a central aspect of the gathering to bring people together. All registered activities are reviewed by **the FoN team** and the winner is chosen among the top three nominations on an assessment of what was done and how well this reflects the purpose of the award. If the first nominee is not present at the finale, the award would go to the second ranked.
- **Youth Award:** Given to an activity in which one or more youth under the age of 21 have

taken a leadership role. All registered activities are reviewed by **the FoN team** and the winner is chosen among the top three nominations on an assessment of what was done and how well this reflects the purpose of the award. Unless the organizer of the number 1 activity is absent at the Finale, they would receive the award.

- **Inclusion Award:** Given to a group who has specifically designed a gathering to be inclusive of diversity, for example in culture, age, ability, economic level and/or identity. All registered activities are reviewed by the **award sponsor** and the winner and runners up are selected based on an assessment of what was done and how well this reflects the purpose of the award. If the first nominee is not present at the finale, the award would go to the second ranked.
- **Safer Neighbourhood Award:** Given to a group who has registered a gathering with the purpose of building a stronger, safer neighbourhood by encouraging community engagement and participation. All registered activities are reviewed by **the FoN team** and the top three are selected based on an assessment of what was done and how well this reflects the purpose of the award. Unless the organizer of the number 1 activity is absent at the Finale, they would receive the.
- **Green Neighbourhood Award:** Given to a group whose project or activity includes or is centred on environmental action, such as a community cleanup, conservation or beautification. All registered activities are reviewed by **the FoN team** and the top three are selected based on an assessment of what was done and how well this reflects the purpose of the award. If the first nominee is not present at the finale, the award would go to the second runner up, or subsequently the third runner up.
- **Heritage Award:** Given to a group that organized an event in order to celebrate the history and heritage of their neighbourhood. All registered activities are reviewed by **the FoN team** and the top three are selected based on an assessment of what was done and how well this reflects the purpose of the award. Unless the organizer of the number 1 activity is absent at the Finale, they would receive the.
- **Neighbourhood Connections Award:** This award is given to a neighbourhood that expresses a desire to do more to improve their neighbourhood or the quality of life for its residents. It is awarded to a neighbourhood that demonstrates a need and indicates a desire to participate in such a process with the award sponsor, **Social Development Centre Waterloo Region**. All registrations are reviewed by the sponsor and a winner and runner up are selected. Each is contacted to confirm they will be at the Finale. If the winner of this award wins a Capital Improvement Grant, the next runner up will receive the award.
- **Capital Investment Grants:** The City of Kitchener offers a grant to a winning neighbourhood to invest in a physical improvement such as parks structures, signage, tree planting, construction of an outdoor gathering place, etc. There is only one ballot per neighbourhood in the Capital Improvement Grant **draw!** The winning ballot is drawn from all qualifying neighbourhoods at the end of the Finale. A neighbourhood must have a representative in attendance when the draw is made.

7. If we win a Capital Improvement Grant, what do we have to do?

The Capital Improvement Grant goes to a neighbourhood, rather than an individual or a neighbourhood group who organized activities. The winners do not receive a cheque for \$20,000. They establish a committee representing an area of at least fifty (50) houses to kick off the consultation in order to decide what neighbourhood improvement project has the greatest

support. Additional grants may be pursued if the cost of the chosen project exceeds the grant amount.

As long as a neighbourhood remain in talks with the City of Kitchener in regards to their capital improvement project, they are not eligible for an new grant. Once their project is completed, they become eligible again.

8. What has been done with the Capital Improvement Grants in the past?

- 1994** Mt. Hope-Breithaupt Park Neighbourhood: Duke St. Playground re-design & upgrades
- 1995** Courtland Shelley Neighbourhood: Vanier Park bridge, playground upgrades & planting
- 1996** Cedar Hills Neighbourhood: Residential Façade Improvement Loan Fund (no specific location all over the neighbourhood)
- 1997** College St. Neighbourhood: safety audit and streetscape improvements
- 1998** Kilkerran Crescent Neighbourhood: accessible nature trail in neighbourhood woodlot
- 1999** Doon Pioneer Community Association: Doon Skatium mobile skateboard park (Community Centre)
- 2000** Brubacher St: park upgrades (Brubacher Park)
- 2001** Asgard Green/Cherry St.: green space improvements and accessible walking trail
- 2002** Huron Park Community Garden: improvements to Huron Park (Weber and Louisa St)
- 2003** Country Hills: accessible playground and park upgrades (at the Country Hills Community Centre)
- 2004** Breithaupt Park Neighbourhood: upgrade to park area with soccer field, winter rink, storage shed and outdoor performance area with hydro, also expected is new LCD projector for Movie (at Breithaupt Centre)
- 2005** Chandler-Mowat Neighbourhood: spray pad (at Chandler-Mowat Community Centre)
- 2006** Margaret / Guelph / Weber / Erb: park landscaping (Hartwood Green):
- 2007** Auditorium Neighbourhood Association: renovation of Knollwood park
- 2008** Chandler-Mowat Neighbourhood: park up-grades, benches etc. (at community centre)
- 2009** Topper Woods/Doon: playground and park up-grades (Marigold Park)
- 2010** Robert Ferrie Dr-Southridge St.- Monarch Woods Dr.: playground and park up-grades (Marigold Park)
- 2011** Olde Berlin Towne Neighbourhood: Heritage banners & walking tour information posts (all around the neighbourhood)
- 2012** Valleyview Neighbourhood area: park renovation (Windale Park)
- 2013** Chandler-Mowat Neighbourhood: in consultation
- 2014** Brock Street Neighbourhood: Home Wood Green structures
- 2015** Ward 6 – in consultation
- 2016** Edgewater Estates & Hohner Avenue – in consultation

9. What is the Ward Challenge?

[The Ward Challenge](#) encourages city councillors to get involved in the Festival of Neighbourhoods by inciting people in their wards to get together and organize inclusive neighbourhood activities. The Ward Challenge Award recognizes the City of Kitchener Ward that has the most registered gatherings. Your gathering will automatically be counted towards this award for your ward when you complete your registration.

10. How many times can we register?

A neighbourhood can register all the inclusive activities they organize – the more ways we bring neighbours together, the more connected and resilient our neighbourhoods will be. Each registered activity or gathering will be considered for awards.

Each distinctly defined neighbourhood area that has registered (regardless of multiple activities) will qualify for only **one** ballot in the capital grant, newcomer and pillar draws, regardless of who has registered the activities. When planning an activity, be very clear to define the neighbourhood area.

11. What is Early Bird Prize?

We encourage all neighbourhoods to register early and often—and we organize [four Early Bird Draws](#) through the year so that all activities registered within the Early Bird deadlines can win prizes to help them with their next activity. At the same time, the registration process is smoother and richer as the information collection is distributed evenly throughout the year.

Neighbourhoods can register activities held from October 1 before the four deadlines throughout the year: **January 15, March 15, May 15 and July 15.**

If you would want to sponsor an Early Bird prize and bring your business closer to homes and hearts of Kitchener's neighbourhoods, take a look at the [Early Bird Sponsorship form](#) and get in touch with us!

12. What is the Festival of Neighbourhoods Map?

The [interactive map of neighbourhood activities](#) is online now and your activities will appear on the map of Kitchener as you register! We are mapping all the neighbourhood activities you tell us about – even before they get registered! This way, you can see all the richness of neighbourhood life, be reminded which of your activities still have to be registered and get inspired by what others are doing. The map is your trusted companion:

- telling the story of the Kitchener Neighbourhoods
- providing a way to see who else is doing great stuff in your neighbourhood
- showing which Kitchener Wards could win the Ward Challenge
- showing the registered activities' information and testimonials
- providing easy access to the registration link for activities not yet registered
- displays neighbourhood improvement projects
- displaying a calendar of monthly events

13. What is E-Neighbour?

[E-Neighbour](#) is a bimonthly newsletter where we publish all the updates, upcoming Early Bird deadlines, stories from neighbourhoods, surveys, and important tips and resources. We tell you as well about other neighbourhood initiatives throughout the year, such as Jane's Walk, Earth Month and Neighbours Day! You can [subscribe](#) and never miss a thing.