



REACH! INCLUSION CHALLENGE

"No event can be 100% inclusive but we need to strive to ensure that it is accessible for all. We can improve each time we organize an event!"

Paula Saunders, Independent Living Centre Waterloo Region

At last year's Festival Finale, Paula Saunders of the Independent Living Centre Waterloo Region, the Inclusion Award sponsor, challenged everyone to go one step further in what they would usually do to bring their diverse neighbours together.

We invite you to take the REACH! INCLUSION CHALLENGE and to focus on ONE IDEA to have a more inclusive, welcoming & accessible neighbourhood gathering.

LIST OF IDEAS to make your neighbourhood gathering welcoming and accessible to everyone! You can find out more about simple steps to plan your gatherings in the [Neighbourhood Activity Guide!](#)

- **Who to Invite – Everyone!**

- Different messages work for different people – try large font or translations!
- Name your event in a way that makes everyone feel it is meant for them.
- Invite other groups to religious or cultural celebrations to share their custom.
- Knock on doors of neighbours whose names you do not know.
- Ask neighbours you know to bring another person with them.

- **Organization - Ask for Help!**

- Ask at least one person who did not help out before.
- Ask neighbours to bring their games and needed items instead of buying them if they can.
- Check if there are volunteers in schools and community centres that would like to give a hand.

- **Activities – Plan them with your Neighbours!**

- Talk to more neighbours before planning activities, they will tell you what suits their interests and skills.
- When health or ability prevents neighbours from joining in, bring some activities or food to enjoy at their front door.
- Delegate more, people may like to be in charge of specific tasks.
- Dedicate a 'quiet place' with seating for people to unwind, calm down and rest when they need to.
- Make sure that at least one of the activities offers neighbours a chance to be at the same place at the same time, e.g. a BBQ at the end of the garage sale!
- Consider diet preferences or allergies and offer a variety of food choices.

- **Invitations – Mix the Channels!**
 - In small neighbourhoods, knock on every door.
 - In larger neighbourhoods, seek partners who can share the invitation.
 - Include an image, map or a drawing of the physical layout of the activities at the gathering.
 - Write on the flyer what happens at the beginning, middle and end of the gathering.
 - Designate point people for the gathering and announce they are available to help and answer questions.

- **Date and Time – Open to as many people as possible!**
 - Host the gathering outside of “regular” work hours.
 - Check the calendar for to avoid major religious or ethnic holidays.
 - Consider major sports or festival events competing for attention.

- **Location – Accessible to Everyone!**
 - Be close to paved paths in parks and green areas for access with mobility devices
 - Consider hosting in well-known or popular locations, “natural” neighbourhood gathering places.
 - Make sure the space is large enough so wheelchair or scooter users can move about freely.
 - Check that the washrooms are accessible or rent an accessible port-a-potty if you are having your gathering outside.
 - Organize transportation or an easy access if you choose a location outside of the neighbourhood.
 - Be close to major public transportation routes in the neighbourhood.

- **Skills & Equipment – Minimum Required!**
 - Make sure a part of your gathering does not require specific skills, abilities or equipment to take part (e.g. hot-chocolate stand at the skating party)
 - Promote “cheering” or “finish-line party” as the main activity at a gathering initiated around a neighbourhood soccer game, tobogganing or a bike parade.

- **Cost – Affordable to Everyone!**
 - Minimize participant contributions by seeking sponsorship for special entertainment activities
 - In a small neighbourhood, ask every neighbour if they would be willing to pay to attend a neighbourhood outing before deciding to organize one.
 - Even with small nominal entrance fees, have special rates for families.

The eligibility criteria for FON activities haven't changed!

- Activity organized for a specific geographic area as defined by organizers
- Reach out and invite all the neighbours to the activity
- Neighbours have an opportunity to interact face to face and get to know each other

Call us any time with ideas, suggestions & questions 519-579-3800. We have more useful tools!
