

**Report on the Cherry Park Forum:**  
***Unleash the Power of Neighbours***  
Neighbourhood Connections Working Group  
April 2017

## **Introduction**

Cherry Park is the recipient of the 2016 Social Development Centre's<sup>1</sup> Neighbourhood Connections award and Cherry Park Neighbourhood Association<sup>2</sup> leaders have identified a priority to get more people involved in the neighbourhood and association.

A Working Group was set up early January 2017 to move this idea forward. The working group proposed a forum for neighbours currently involved in neighbourhood events, programs and committees and those who have some interest in getting involved.

The goal of the forum was to better understand how to unleash the power of Cherry Park neighbours – those who are currently involved and those who want to be involved.

Forum objectives:

- a) Engage current leaders and volunteers, interested neighbours who may want to get involved and other stakeholders who have a leadership role in the neighbourhood.
- b) Provide a forum to explore what is valued about the neighbourhood and what is happening now in the neighbourhood, what excites and inspires people to be involved and how this energy can be nurtured.

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<sup>1</sup> The Social Development Centre is a community based public benefit organization that works to cultivate community knowledge to advance social justice. Established in 1967, the Social Development Centre provides a community information and data management service, facilitates community groups and works with various community partners to lead social research, social planning, community development and advocacy initiatives. As a partner in Kitchener's Festival of Neighbourhoods, the Social Development Centre sponsors an annual Neighbourhood Connections Award to support neighbourhoods that are interested in improving the social conditions in their neighbourhood.

<sup>2</sup> The Cherry Park Neighbourhood Association vision is to build an innovative, inclusive, and vibrant Kitchener with safe and thriving neighbourhoods. Association volunteers are active in many ways to provide programs for all ages, special events such as the Cherry Festival and special projects such as the cob oven and KCI mural project.

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### **Unleash the Power of Neighbours Promo:**

This event is an opportunity to meet keen neighbours - those already involved in our neighbourhood and those who want to get involved. Your experience and enthusiasm are valuable resources that help to make Cherry Park a strong neighbourhood. At this participatory session we will talk about how we got involved and what keeps us energized. We will recognize the good work being done, explore new ways to work together and consider how to inspire others to get more active. Together we will create a plan of action to help unleash the passion of our neighbours.

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- c) Determine possible directions for strengthening the existing interest and enabling future interest.
- d) Assess whether further action can be taken to build neighbourhood engagement structures and processes.

The forum was held Saturday March 25, 2017 at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. In total, 25 people took part during the forum. Participants reflected a wide range of ages and included current neighbourhood association volunteers, interested residents and business representatives/ Following is a report of what was heard at the forum and proposal for next steps in the Neighbourhood Connections process. This report is intended for those who attended the meeting and the Cherry Park Neighbourhood Association Board and it may also be of interest to anyone interested in initiating a community project.

## **Creating Our Collective Big Picture**

### **Our Shared Values**

Through the consensus building process of a Four-Word Exercise, the participants developed two sets of shared values for, respectively, what is valued about their neighbourhood and the values that drive why they get involved.

#### ***Part A – What we value about our neighbourhood***

1. Central location
2. Green spaces
3. Friendly and diverse neighbours
4. Innovative community activities

#### ***Part B – Why get involved***

1. Desire for change
2. Attainable Impact
3. Belonging
4. Fulfillment

These simple lists reflect important shared values and can be used when needed to communicate a common message of what is important.

### **Mapping Our Involvement**

Forum participants reported being involved in eight neighbourhood association committees, five neighbourhood programs, and three events. These are listed in Table 1a). The greatest number of forum participants reported being involved in the Cherry Park Festival (N=10), the Community Clean Up (N=6), the Neighbourhood Association Board (N=6), and the Community Garden (N=5). A wide range of other kinds of involvement were reported (see Table 1b)) with the Social Development Centre and church mentioned most.

**Table 1a): Unleashing the Power Session: Cherry Park Neighbourhood Association Involvement**

CPNA Committees	CPNA Programs	CPNA Events
Board (6) Newsletter (2) Volunteer (1) Programming (1) Safety Committee (1) Cherry Park Festival (1) Public Art (1) City rep for Cherry park picnic shelter project (1)	Community Garden (5) Walking Group (Program) (2) Youth Club (Program) (2) Cob Oven (Program) (1) Garden Club (Program) (1)	Cherry Park Festival (10) Community Clean-Up (6) Corn Social (4)

**Table 1b): Unleashing the Power Session: Other Involvement**

Other organizations	Other/personal	Former activities
Social Development Centre (Other) (3) Church/other (2) Glow Centre Volunteer (1) Campus Initiatives (1) Choirs (1) Self-Help Alliance (1) Library (1) Sign language course Neighbourhood Watch (Program) (1) Queen Street Yoga (1) Youth Club (1) Involved with King Edward School (1) Community Justice Initiatives Volunteer (1) Works with KW Badminton Club (Partner with CPNA) (1) Volunteer as Parade Chair (with Cambridge Canada day) (1) Volunteer with Canadian Food for Children Shoe Box Project (1) Volunteer with City of Kitchener and Cambridge with special events (1) Pickleball (1) ION Public Art (1) Other Volunteering (1) Ran community music and arts event in downtown Kitchener Involved in yoga at Belmont (Midtown Yoga) Very involved in efforts to save the Boathouse and informing city council of the importance of arts and music as an economic drive for downtown Involved in running and cycling in KW	Graphics and Marketing (1) Social Media (1) Executive Director of 10000 Forests Received Waterloo Region - 40 under 40 award Recipient of the Waterloo Region arts award Competitive adventure racer Works with anyone who wants support with grassroots projects to do great things in their neighbourhood -	Ran for Ward 9 Kitchener City Council in 2014

## Looking to the Future: Motivating People to Get Involved

Participants formed small groups to discuss ways to motivate people to get more involved. A summary of themes that emerged in the small group discussion and detailed notes from the small group discussions are included in Appendix A. The following are the common points from the large group debriefing:

- **Offer more activities:**
  - Food related activities
    - Have food – it builds community
    - Food themed activities/programs
    - Potlucks
    - Have cake
  - Have smaller social gatherings
  - Foster skill building (workshops)
  - Trust / team-building
  - Facilitating connections between people with similar interests
  - Have a community centre they can come to
  
- **Communication and outreach:**
  - Talk to people
    - Welcome wagon
    - Appeal to their interests
  - Installation of Community Notice Boards
  - Create a directory of interests and skills
  
- **Survey the neighbourhood to find out barriers / interests**
  - Demographics / survey
  - Recognizing gaps

In both the small group discussions and large group debrief, three general directions emerged for how to get people more involved in the neighbourhood:

- **Create opportunities** – largely through providing more activities.
- **Communicate**– using various methods to connect with people, including talking to people.
- **Get to know the people in the neighbourhood** –suggested ways for doing this included demographic profiles, surveys, meeting people and/or creating a neighbourhood directory.

# Group Debrief and Wrap Up

## Did we accomplish the purpose and goals of the Forum?

Goal: Explore what we value in our community and what motivates us to be involved in the community. → YES!

## What was liked:

- An organized approach
- The chance to meet other neighbours
- Gaining skills / ideas to take with us in our one-on-one conversations with others to find out what it takes for someone to get involved

## Areas of improvements / Comments and suggestions:

- More time for introductions
- Fewer agenda items so we could focus more time on specific activities
- Acoustics were not good, there was echoing which made it difficult to hear at times
- There may have been some confusion between what we value in a community (our dream / ideal community) vs. what we currently value in our community of Cherry Park
- Similar to above, there may be a distinction between what we value (i.e., location, safety) vs. our personal values (i.e., integrity, trust) which is important to distinguish as it helps us to understand our motivations and desires for our community
- Have chocolate cake ☺

## Points Raised for Follow up Action to the Forum:

- Create a brief report that can be sent out to the CPNA Board, those involved in the Forum, and other interested parties
- Everyone invite at least one other person to get involved in event/s in our community
- Each person should consider an action item for themselves – something that they can do to share their enthusiasm to encourage others to get more involved
- Food for Thought:
  - Think about items we still want to cover and address.
  - Let's get some feedback and continue the conversations!

## What Now: Working Group Follow up

The Working Group reviewed the input from the forum and synthesized these into six guiding principles for 'Unleashing the Power of Neighbours' as follows:

- 1. Know who is in your neighbourhood:** Reach out to get to know people; talk to people and/or conduct survey to find out their interests.
- 2. Support people's passions:** Encourage and support others to take initiative on what they feel passionate about.
- 3. Build trust and teams:** Share power, practice reciprocity.
- 4. Regular communication:** Know your audience and tailor communication; maintain contact lists to simplify tasks, face to face, door to door flyers and internet all have a role.
- 5. Have a common purpose:** Assess how an activity fits with what is valued in the neighbourhood and with what motivates people.
- 6. Include food:** In many ways, *food* can build community, whether as hospitality to welcome people or, as the focus for an activity.

The Working Group noted there is much activity already happening in the neighbourhood but not yet a defined neighbourhood vision nor stated goals for activities overall. An excellent start for defining a common purpose are the two sets of four points that the forum participants developed for *what is valued about the neighbourhood* and *why people get involved*. Building on these would help in developing a shared purpose and overarching goals for neighbourhood activities. Having an overarching vision and shared goals would be useful for the neighbourhood association as a whole and for those who want to take action.

The Working Group noted also the interest expressed by many participants in continuing the dialogue started in the first session. A second forum is recommended by the working group to focus on reviewing the above draft guiding principles, developing a shared purpose that can guide action and encouraging those who want to get involved to take steps to do so.

Further to this, the Working Group has reflected on what was learned from the forum and have identified three key points to keep in mind as the working group moves forward on any follow-up to motivate others to get involved:

- Build trust and strengthen teams;
- Encourage leadership and planning; and
- Be practical and concrete.

Based on the interest shown at the first forum, the Working Group proposes a follow up session with the purpose to:

1. Affirm the values that emerged in the first session:
  - About CP neighbourhood and
  - What motivates people to be involved.
2. Validate the six guiding principles developed from the input from the first forum.
3. Get further feedback to help:
  - Articulate a shared purpose for neighbourhood activities (events, programs, projects); and
  - Set direction for a possible Neighbourhood Connections engagement project.

At this point in the process, given the themes that emerged in the forum discussions, there are three possibilities for an in-depth Neighbourhood Connections project that, with sufficient interest and resources, could be facilitated by the Social Development Centre:

- Training for teambuilding and/or action planning;
- Developing a neighbourhood profile so those involved can have a better understanding of the neighbourhood and those who live there<sup>3</sup>or
- Door to door outreach especially to apartment dwellers to a) inform residents, b) encourage involvement and/or c) conduct a survey to better understand what people need and want.

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<sup>3</sup> The Social Development Centre has developed a *Strong Neighbourhoods for Decent Lives* framework that can be used for this.

## Appendix A: Small Group Discussions of How To Motivate People to Get Involved

Appendix A, Table 1. Themes That Emerged in Small group discussion: How Can We Motivate People to Get Involved?

<b>Create Opportunities</b>	Host Opportunities to Participate	Have a variety of activities to meet diverse needs and interests Multiple formats for participation Block party Smaller social community events Activities targeted Meaningful activities Food Potlucks One-time events / short term Low effort/investment activities Trust-building activities a. Target those interests
	Provide Opportunities To Share	2. Opportunities for sharing resources 8. Sharing library 12. Skill-sharing / building 11. Offering support a. Parenting b. Etc.
	Help People to Connect With Others	Personal connection 3. Making and building connections 4. Facilitating connections 7. New friendships
	Develop Leadership	5. Engaging diverse leaders a. Succession 5. Self starter Offer Funds For people to take initiative - a. Advertising for funding
	Community Centre	Having a central space / community centre where people can meet consistently (tangible, physical location)



<b>Communication</b>	<b>Regular and Multi Format Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Continued communication</li> <li>a. Various methods of communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Social media</li> <li>ii. Newsletters</li> <li>iii. Etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Neighbourhood magazine</li> <li>8. Community boards</li> </ul>
<b>Know the People In the Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Understand the Demographics of the Neighbourhood</b>	<p>Understanding the demographics and their interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demographic / survey response</li> </ul>
	<b>Understand People's Interests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Find out what people actually care about</li> <li>a. Ask community about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Activity</li> <li>iii. Potential volunteers</li> <li>iv. Barriers to involvement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>Create A Neighbourhood Directory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Profile individual interests/activity</li> <li>7. Directory of interests / skills (Who does what?)</li> </ul>

**Appendix A, Table 2: Notes From Small group discussion: How Can We Motivate People to Get Involved?**

Group 1:	Group 2:	Group 3:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continued communication               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Various methods of communication                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Social media</li> <li>ii. Newsletters</li> <li>iii. Etc.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Have a variety of activities to meet diverse needs and interests</li> <li>3. Find out what people actually care about</li> <li>4. Having a central space / community centre where people can meet consistently               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. (tangible, physical location)</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Engaging diverse leaders               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Succession</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding the demographics and their interests               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Target those interests</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Opportunities for sharing resources</li> <li>3. Making and building connections</li> <li>4. Facilitating connections</li> <li>5. Trust-building activities</li> <li>6. Neighbourhood magazine               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Advertising for funding</li> <li>b. Profile individual interests/activity</li> </ol> </li> <li>7. Directory of interests / skills (Who does what?)</li> <li>8. Sharing library</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demographic / survey response               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ask community about:                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Activity</li> <li>ii. Interests</li> <li>iii. Potential volunteers</li> <li>iv. Barriers to involvement</li> </ol> </li> <li>b. Multiple formats for participation</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Personal connection</li> <li>3. Food               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Potlucks</li> <li>b. Block party</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Smaller social community events</li> <li>5. Self starter</li> <li>6. Meaningful activities</li> <li>7. New friendships</li> <li>8. Community boards</li> <li>9. Activities targeted</li> <li>10. Foster partnerships with organizations</li> <li>11. Offering support               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Parenting</li> <li>b. Etc.</li> </ol> </li> <li>12. Skill-sharing / building</li> <li>13. One-time events / short term</li> <li>14. Low effort/nvestment activities</li> </ol>

## Appendix B and attendee list are for the Working Group version of the report

### Appendix B: What Are People Involved In?

Name	NA Committees	NA Programs	NA Events	Other
Angela B.				Glow Centre Volunteer Advocacy director Campus Initiatives ( Gender Equity Fair Homelessness Awareness Fair Social Development Centre Volunteer
Myron S		Community Garden	Community Clean-Up	Lives at 170 Cherry Walks the Iron Horse Trail
Nicole R.	CPNA Board Former Treasurer for 2 years		Involved with Clean-Up Corn Social Cherry Festival	
Linda K.	CPNA Volunteer		Clean-Up Cherry Festival	Helping neighbours
Hannah S.	CPNA Board	Walking Group Gardener		Part of 3 choirs (Other) Self Help Alliance (Other) Library (Other) Graphics and Marketing (Other) Social media (Other) Queen Street Yoga (Other)
Ruthi K.		Past - Youth Club	Community Clean-Up Past - Cherry Festival	Sauna
Rachel K.		Community garden participant		
John V.	Newsletter carrier	CPNA Walking Group	Volunteer at Cherry Festival Corn Social volunteer	Other volunteer stuff

Carmen B.				Involved with King Edward School Committees at church (Outside of CPN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Youth children programs</li> <li>- Women's group</li> </ul>
Shirley G.	CPNA President Programming Newsletter	Community Gardens Garden Club Cob Oven	Cherry Festival Corn Social	Church
Nicole K.	CPNA member / neigh connections working group	Community Garden	Cherry Park Festival volunteer	Social Development Centre (Other) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Board member</li> <li>b. Social Planning Council</li> </ul> CJI Volunteer (Other) CIJI event volunteer (Other)
Patricia A.				Works with KW Badminton Club (partner with CPNA) Volunteer as Parade Chair (with Cambridge Canada day) Volunteer with Canadian Food for Children Shoe Box Project ( ) Volunteer with City of Kitchener and Cambridge with special events Run tournaments in Canada and USA for pickle ball Run KW Pickleball
Phyllis D.	Safety committee for CPNA Hold meetings for cherry festival	Walks every night as a group to watch for drug dealers		Neighbourhood watch captain
Gwen W	Public art	Strange Street Garden	Cherry Festival	Intensification and re-development ION public art
Tessa J.				Urban Planner Executive Director of 10,000 Forests A non-profit charity dedicated to urban reforestation Ran for Ward 9 Kitchener City Council in 2014 Will run again in 2015 Ran community music and arts event in downtown Kitchener Involved in yoga at Belmont (Midtown Yoga) Very involved in efforts to save the Boathouse and informing city

				<p>council of the importance of arts and music as an economic drive for downtown</p> <p>Received Waterloo Region to 40 under 40</p> <p>Recipient of the Waterloo Region arts award</p> <p>Competitive adventure racer</p> <p>Involved in running and cycling in KW</p>
Mark H.	City Rep for Cherry Park picnic shelter project (Committee)		City Rep for Cherry Festival	<p>Works for City of Kitchener</p> <p>Works with anyone who wants support with grassroots projects to do great things in their neighbourhood</p>
Steve P.	CPNA Board		<p>Part of Cherry Festival</p> <p>Part of Clean-Up/BBQ Corn Social</p>	<p>Sign Language Class</p> <p>Youth Club</p>
Wilf K.			<p>Cherry Festival</p> <p>Clean-Up</p>	Ice cream

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