

# Building Neighbourhood HUBS In Thorold

Real people, real neighbours



“We are discovering that it takes a village to do more than raise a child. It is the key to a satisfying life. It turns out we need our neighbours and a community to be healthy, produce jobs, protect the land and care for the elderly and those on the margin”. [www.abundantcommunityinitiative.org](http://www.abundantcommunityinitiative.org)

## WHY are neighbourhood HUBS important?

Whether you live in a new neighbourhood, an old neighbourhood, a townhouse, an apartment building, your neighbours are part of the fabric of your life.

Where neighbours share a sense of community, residents are more likely to feel safe and secure and have a lower fear of crime than when there is no sense of community.

28% of Canadians live alone; neighbourhood hubs can alleviate loneliness.

People living in Connected neighbourhoods feel healthier and happier about their lives;

“one of the strongest indicators of physical and mental health is ‘social integration’; the number of social interactions you have with other human beings no matter how brief”.

Suzan Pinker

Neighbourliness is not a special talent – it is a decision!

Anyone can be a good neighbour- it takes a little initiative and intentionality and the results will make it all worthwhile.



**Neighbourhoods with a higher sense of Community enjoy a higher quality of life.**

**So do it for yourself and your family!**

## FIRST STEPS towards building a neighbourhood hub:

### Getting to know your neighbours; you can take the initiative!

Finding the courage to make new connections is not easy for everyone. But you and your neighbours will discover that it becomes easier after the first step.

#### Try the following:

- ✚ Find an excuse to walk around the block with your pet or children to make yourself visible.
- ✚ Say hello to everyone you meet on your block.
- ✚ Give your neighbours a compliment: "Your lawn/ garden looks nice."
- ✚ Take your backyard project to the front yard. Work on your bike or lawnmower on your porch or sidewalk. That way you can say "hi" to neighbours.
- ✚ If you've lived on your block for some time, take the first step toward newcomers. Take new neighbours a plant or small gift, bake them some cookies or help them unload their car, and welcome them to the neighbourhood.
- ✚ If you are a praying person, walk around your neighbourhood and pray.



#### Small Acts that go a long way . . .

Here are a few enjoyable things you can do to make your neighbourhood friendly and cheerful.

- ✓ Leave a holiday treat as a surprise to brighten a neighbor's day.
- ✓ Leave cut flowers in a jar on the sidewalk with a "take one" sign.
- ✓ Visit a farmer's market and bring fresh produce to a homebound neighbor.
- ✓ Ask a longtime resident to share some stories of your block. Invite an elderly neighbor to an event he/she would enjoy.
- ✓ Hire a neighbourhood teen to help you with some yard work or to clean an elderly neighbor's windows.

- ✓ During hot or cold spells, check in on community elders to make sure they are safe and comfortable. Sadly, a few elderly people die every year during heat or cold waves because no one bothered to check on them.
- ✓ Mow the yard, rake the leaves or clean the gutters of an elderly neighbor. Many of them are unable to do it themselves and can't afford to pay someone to do it for them.
- ✓ Invite a neighbor to your front porch for some iced tea.
- ✓ Do face painting for the kids.
- ✓ Help neighbourhood children create a lemonade stand.

## NEXT STEPS towards building a neighbourhood hub:

### Building Trust through Group Activities

So, you have made connections with your neighbours and done acts of kindness. That's a good first step. Now you can strengthen your relationships and build trust with your neighbours through group activities. You don't have to become friends overnight, but through activities together, you can learn to trust each other. Over time you might become friends or just stay friendly neighbours, but either way you can feel better knowing who is living around you.



Try some of the following ideas:

- ❖ Put up a neighbourhood bulletin board, create a neighbourhood WhatsApp group or Facebook page.
- ❖ Organize a 'welcome wagon' for new neighbours.
- ❖ Have a neighbourhood Yard sale. Your neighbours are sure to come, and you might even sell a few things.
- ❖ Organize a block party; food is always a great reason to bring people together; **some funding will be available through city hall.**
- ❖ Research the history of the neighbourhood.
- ❖ Create a neighbourhood map and share it with the rest of your block. **(sample included)**
- ❖ Celebrate diversity through a potluck! Encourage people to bring food that reflects their family's cultural or ethnic history, or invite neighbours to teach one another how to cook some of their favourite multi-cultural meals.
- ❖ Get a few neighbours together to plant flowers in a median; invite neighbours to clean up a local park.



## What can you expect to happen:

“Experience and research has shown that strong neighbourhood hubs are places where neighbours:

- Know each other and over time develop strong ties
- Share resources and other items (like tools, yards, sports equipment, kids’ toys etc.)
- Are available to help each other out in small or sometimes big ways; look after each other’s homes while on vacation, etc.
- Are able to cooperate and share leadership in street or building”.

## What are you waiting for; let’s get started!

### Become a Neighbourhood Hub champion:

A Hub champion is a neighbour who initiates the connection and neighbourhood conversations with each household in their street/apartment/condominium.

A person who is willing to take the initiative, to take the lead in building a Neighbourhood Hub

The champion will be supported by the Neighbourhood Hub Team

### Neighbourhood Hub partners:

- Neighbourhood Hub Team (a sub team of One Thorold)
- One Thorold
- Area churches
- City of Thorold

For more information and resourcing contact: [hildavk@myvillagechurch.ca](mailto:hildavk@myvillagechurch.ca)

Resources used :

‘Building Neighborhood Connections’, Michigan State University Extension  
[Resilientneighbourhoods.ca](http://Resilientneighbourhoods.ca)

Abundant Community Initiative; [www.abundantcommunityinitiative.org](http://www.abundantcommunityinitiative.org)

“The Art of Neighbouring” by Pathak and Runyon

# WHO ARE MY NEIGHBOURS?

a.	a.	a.
b.	b.	b.
c.	c.	c.
d.	d.	d.
a.		a.
b.		b.
c.		c.
d.		d.
a.	a.	a.
b.	b.	b.
c.	c.	c.
d.	d.	d.

Chart adapted from "The Art of Neighboring" by Pathak & Runyon

- a. Names of your neighbours
- b. Names of their children
- c. Their professions
- d. Their hobbies, dreams, etc.

## Some stories to inspire.....

“In 2008, the municipal government of St. Albert in Alberta began encouraging residents to throw block parties in their neighbourhoods by providing easy online applications for free street closures, free activity kits and ideas, and even free food! By 2016, this city of 61,000 had hosted over 130 parties in 17 different neighbourhoods. Neighbours reported that the parties led to them feeling more connected and safer in their neighbourhoods. The program has been so successful that the government began to actively recruit and train “Neighbourhood Connectors” to go door-to-door meeting people and helping bring their neighbours together”

“People who live in apartment buildings or condos sometimes have to be creative in finding space for large community gatherings. In District Main, a 79-unit building in Vancouver, BC, the landlord took it upon himself to host three annual gatherings per year in the building’s common areas. Events included a pumpkin carving contest, an outdoor movie night, and themed parties. These gatherings led to other initiatives like a communal wine rack and a closet set aside for sharing outdoor equipment. In other apartment blocks that may lack common space for gatherings, residents have chosen to host parties in nearby parks or beaches or around temporary, faux fire pits.”

“On McCaskill Street in Victoria, BC, residents turned an old retaining wall from an eyesore into an eye-catching mural. The quirky result brought them all closer together and “branded” their street for visitors. Just a couple of neighbourhoods east, the Fernwood Neighborhood Resource Group holds an annual Pole Painting where artists and the neighbours who reside near particular electricity or street-light poles collaborate on developing art designs before painting the poles. Together, all of the uniquely painted poles bring a lively, colourful atmosphere to the streets.”

“Anne Slepian went door to door in her area of Arlington, Massachusetts, asking people what skill they had that they might be willing to offer in a skills exchange. Her neighbours volunteered everything from guitar lessons to childcare. Anne wrote it all down on a four-page document that she copied and handed out to all of the neighbours. But it soon became clear that nobody was using it because they didn’t know each other – so Slepian organized a potluck where everyone wore a nametag labelled with one of the skills they wanted to swap, and that’s when the project really took off. “Once people got to know each other,” Anne said, “they were more inclined to call each other.”

“One sociable neighbour knocked on every tenant’s door in their three story walk-up apartment building on Fort Street in Victoria, BC and gave out invitations for a cocktail-and snacks get together at her apartment. The party was so successful that the tenants decided to set up a private group on Facebook, and this simple online page quickly began to function like a dynamic, interactive apartment bulletin board for arranging more parties, sharing items, helping each other with errands or during emergencies, and much more. And safety problems in the building disappeared as turnover in the increasingly community-minded building dropped to nearly zero!”