



Festival of Neighbourhoods
Kitchener

thE-neighbour

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▲ The kids of the Victoria School Centre gathered for a photograph at the Multicultural Meet and Greet

◀ Receiving the Inclusion Award from the Independent Living Centre at the Festival Finale in 2008

▲▼ Various neighbours enjoying themselves at the Meet & Greet.



This year, take the Inclusion Challenge!

Festival of Neighbourhoods gatherings are accessible, inclusive and welcome to everyone in the neighbourhood. This is one of the basic criteria for all eligible FoN gatherings, and it can be difficult to achieve. We know that sometimes there is a fine line between someone 'wanting' or 'being interested' in connecting with their neighbours and their not feeling comfortable, able or welcome to participate in activities.

This year we invite everyone to take the Reach! Challenge, by designing neighbourhood gatherings in a way that break down these invisible, but oh so real, barriers. We are asking that we all reflect on the less visible barriers and how our neighbourhood gatherings can be truly open and welcoming to more neighbours.

We are excited to be preparing a check list of tips on how to be intentionally inclusive, and will soon make it available to everyone. Stay posted, and Reach! with us.

REACH! for Inclusive Gatherings

FoN Inclusion Award Winners Have Shown Us All How to Engage All Neighbours

Being inclusive in your neighbourhood might require organizers to overcome barriers to Reach everyone. This was particularly true of Kitchener Housing's Victoria School that had great diversity of culture, language and ages, mixed income, and high tenant turnover. In 2008, Melannie, who lived there, volunteered to engage her neighbours. She found out what was already being done in her complex, thought about what kind of gathering the tenants would want, and about existing barriers, such as language, and how to overcome them. She enlisted volunteers to help plan the gathering and they settled upon a Multicultural Meet and Greet. They personally delivered invitations translated into 15 languages to all neighbours, and sought partnerships and donations from various organizations and businesses. Sometimes they were discouraged when they were greeted with apathy and negativity, but they persevered with the hope that a neighbourhood gathering would bring positive change. The extraordinary efforts of organizers did improve things. After the event people reported feeling like they belonged, and were less fearful. Some who had been initially reticent, had wished they had participated, and many were now interested in future events.

That year, Festival of Neighbourhoods awarded the Inclusion Award to the Victoria School Village for their Multicultural Meet and Greet. This award is presented yearly by the [Independent Living Centre](#) to a neighbourhood who deliberately creates an inclusive gathering – welcoming everyone regardless of ability, cultural background, religion or age.

FoN BILLBOARD

- Win a prize for your next neighbourhood gathering!
- Congratulations to Traynor-Vanier Neighbourhood, the winners of the February Early Bird prize, a \$50 card from a local grocery store. Neighbours came together for a Holiday Decorating Party.
- If you haven't registered your activity yet, do so before March 15 to enter in the next Early Bird Draw.

FoN QUICK LINKS

- [Useful Contacts and Resources](#)
- [Neighbourhood Activity Guide](#)
- [Registration Form - Mail & Fax](#)
- [Full Online Registration](#)
- [Neighbourhood Activity Trunk](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Grant Opportunities](#)
- [Becoming a Sponsor](#)