



Community Safety Awards 2011

Winner profile: United Neighbours Environment and Beautification Working Group Community Safety Volunteer Program Award

When people believe in themselves—and in the value of their community—great things happen. That's the case in the west end of the city, where 65 members of the United Neighbours Environment and Beautification Working Group share a common belief that beautiful neighbourhoods help prevent crime.

Established in 2008, this volunteer group is a model of collaboration—made up of residents, business owners, tenant associations, police, service providers and the local community housing board. Their goal? To connect neighbours, reduce crime and create a greater sense of security by ensuring everyone feels invested in their shared spaces.

The group has introduced community gardens, workshops, neighbourhood clean-ups, crime prevention through environmental design audits, special events, and a program to “Take Back Regina Lane” from speeders. On October 1st, 150 volunteers gathered at Pinecrest Terrace to build play structures donated by “Let Them Be Kids.” Today, the children have a welcoming, safe play area and parents and teenagers have a place to connect and talk.

As for the future, the Environment and Beautification Working Group is working on sustainable long-term action plans. Each decision made is driven by the community. It's an approach that instills a sense of ownership and pride—and helps transcend differences.

The result is that people of all ages and backgrounds are coming together to send a clear message that they care about their community. They're tackling vandalism, litter and theft. They're cultivating organic gardens, painting basketball courts and cleaning up brush in the park. Why? They want to feel safe and they're motivated by the need to leave a better, more beautiful community for their children to enjoy.

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