

United Neighbours: *A Community Building Experience*



*Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre
Report prepared by Robynn Collins, PQCHC
2014*



Executive Summary

United Neighbours (UN) is a project that started in 2007 as a result of concerned community members approaching Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre (PQCHC) regarding the increased involvement of youth in drug and gang related activity. Community members urged that research and action be taken to address their concerns. Information received through relationships with community partners including the Ottawa Police, Bay Ward Safety Committee and Neighbourhood Watch programs have confirmed that this is an area that needed attention.

United Neighbours has a broad neighbourhood approach which brings together many neighbourhoods and broad based sectors in the west-end of Ottawa. The majority of the project's objectives (based on the priority issues that were identified by the community through survey work and focus groups) are achieved by members of 4 working groups (Environment & Beautification, Safety, Youth, and Addictions and Mental Health). Each working group has defined their own mandate and is comprised of community members from the entire PQCHC catchment area (business owners, private homeowners, renters, law enforcement, Tenant's Associations and service providers) with key areas of expertise to support the identification and implementation of strategies to address specific issues and reduce barriers in (mainly) Ottawa Community Housing Neighbourhoods.

In it's 7th year, UN has won United Way and Crime Prevention Ottawa appreciation and excellence awards, a United Way Community Builder Award, has been featured dozens of times in various media forms and has a huge following within the area. Further, the ground work laid through the *United Neighbours* project has garnered further trust and credibility for PQCHC as a strong facilitator in creating community solutions. Consistent attendance by various levels of Police Services, the local City Councillor, services providers and community members speaks to their engagement and commitment to the process facilitated by PQCHC.

This Community Report documents how the *United Neighbours* began, the processes we use, highlights what we have identified as Best practices through evaluation, and provides reflections & recommendations from United Neighbours members (residents, staff and community partners alike). The goal is to share our learning's with the broader community including other Community Health & Resource Centres and anyone that takes interest in our project and/or would like more information about "how to" replicate such an initiative. Enjoy....we have.

Dedication & Acknowledgment

This living document is dedicated to each and every United Neighbour who has the desire to make their neighbourhood a safer, healthier and more vibrant place to live.



We would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of our many community partners over the past several years, including but not limited to: Area residents, ACTT Team (PQCHC); Algonquin College; Bayshore Shopping Centre; Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa, particularly the Youth Outreach Workers at Dumarier/ Foster Farm; Canadian Mental Health Association; Carleton University; Carling Family Shelter (City of Ottawa); CAWI (City for all Women Initiative); Catholic Immigration Centre of Ottawa; Centre for Addiction and Mental Health; Champlain LHIN; Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa; Children's Aid Society of Ottawa; City of Ottawa; Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres of Ottawa; Community Employment Resource Centre; Community Health Team (PQCHC); Community Houses, and especially the dedicated Community House Coordinators in the PQCHC catchment area; City of Ottawa Councillor's Mark Taylor and Rick Chiarelli; Crime Prevention Ottawa; Counselling Team (PQCHC); Crime Stoppers; Families First team (PQCHC); First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa; Foster Farm Community Centre; Jewish Family Services of Ottawa; LASI World Skills; Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre; Local Community and Tenant Associations; Member of Parliament, the Honorable Bob Chiarelli Michele Heights Community Centre; OC Transpo; Olde Forge Community Resource Centre; Ontario Early Years Centres; Ottawa Community Housing; Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization; Lowertown Community Health and Resource Centre; Area Ottawa Food Banks; Ottawa Police Service, particularly the Community Police Officers and Sergeants and Staff Sergeants who have fully supported our many initiatives; Ottawa Public Library; Ottawa Public Health; Ottawa Salus Corporation; Ottawa-Carleton District School Board; Ottawa Catholic School Board; Ottawa West End Community Chaplaincy; Pathways to Education staff (PQCHC); Rotary Club of Nepean-Kanata; Rotary Club of Nepean-Kanata; Safe People Project (PQCHC); Somali Father's Association; Somali Youth Support Project (PQCHC); South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre (No Communities Left Behind); Tim Hortons; University of Ottawa; Various local faith groups and organizations; Vanier Community Resource Centre; Volunteer Ottawa; West End Interfaith; Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre; Woodroffe High School; WISE (Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments); YMCA ; Youth Employment Team (PQCHC) ; Youth Net; Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa.

United Neighbours would like to thank our funders including the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Crime Prevention Ottawa, Safer & Vital Communities.

Forward

When I first moved into the neighbourhood, I had two teenage sons who were approached by gangs to sell drugs as soon as I moved in. I didn't know what to do but I decided to join the safety committee, which led to me being invited as resident member of United Neighbours. I became a steering committee member on two of the working groups, Safety and Addiction and Mental Health. I have witnessed firsthand the impact of UN project in capacity building in the community. It is inclusive and it reflects the experiences of the residents. The power structure is non-hierarchical, we all have equal voice. We share best practices and we identified positive action as opposed to sitting around and complaining about things. We are not asking service providers to do more but instead we collaborate in finding ways to work more efficiently together. I believe that very soon this project will be self-sustained.

~Roberta Della-Picca, area resident and co-chair of the United Neighbours Addictions & Mental Health Working group

While Ottawa is one of the safest cities in North America, we are not immune to crime. Ottawa Police will always be ready to respond to any threats of safety in the neighbourhood, however when it comes to long-term safety and security we cannot do it alone. In my ten years of policing experience, I have seen firsthand that while there might be a higher need of police assistance for some priority neighbourhoods, it is the community-led safety initiatives like the United Neighbours that will ultimately contribute to the common goal of building safe and vibrant neighbourhoods.

When I first started my new position as Bayshore Community Police Officer last year, one of the first events I attended was a Coffee House meeting in a community frustrated with a high rate of crime. Several residents came together and talked about issues that concerned them, including safety and crime. I went on to attend other similar meetings and during this past year have noticed an increased interest by the community members in the events taking place in the neighborhood. As residents got to know each other and developed a relationship, they felt safer and experienced more trust and pride in community. The residents were not afraid or hesitant to approach police with their safety concerns and made us aware of the problems that could potentially jeopardize safety for all. There is no doubt in my mind that much of it stems from efforts by United Neighbours and work of its members.

~Constable Admir Minarolli, Community Police Officer, West District, Ottawa Police Services

A Few Words from Bay Ward Councillor Mark Taylor

As the local City Councillor for Bay Ward I am always amazed at the commitment by the members of the United Neighbours group. The time and the effort put forth by residents and the many groups is a testament to the compassion and kindness they have for their community and neighbours. My office continues to work alongside United Neighbours to offer support and assistance wherever needed. We have witnessed the results and seen firsthand the changes and impact their work has on our communities. I want to congratulate everyone involved and with continued efforts we will ensure all residents of our City have a better, safer place to live, work and play.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Taylor', enclosed within a white rectangular box.

Mark Taylor

City of Ottawa Councillor – Bay Ward

We would also like to thank Councillor Rick Chiarelli for his support in several United Neighbours initiatives.

I'm No Superhero

~ By Ayaan (Area resident youth)

I work during the day
And fight crime during the night
I am like any other girl when the sun is shining bright
{But at night...}

I jump out of my day clothes
And into something darker
I look around for trouble
And see where crime is marked
More than an officer, hero, or fighter
I try my best to make people nights a little brighter
No, I am not a super hero, I'm something even better
I'm a helper-outer...oh wait, I've mixed my letters
Guess my grammar isn't so tight
So I'm gonna stick to being a saver of the night!



~Body Map created by Hibo (Area resident youth)

Abbreviations & Acronyms

ABCD	Asset Based Community Development
CAWI	City for All Women Initiative
CDF	Community Development Framework
CHC	Community Health Centre
OCH	Ottawa Community Housing
OCT	OC Transpo/ OC Transit
OPS	Ottawa Police Service
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PQCHC	Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre
UNSC	United Neighbours Steering Committee
WISE	Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	iv
Dedication & Acknowledgment.....	v
Forward.....	vi
A Few Words from Bay Ward Councillor Mark Taylor.....	vii
I'm No Superhero	viii
Abbreviations & Acronyms.....	ix
Table of Contents.....	x
1. Roots of United Neighbours: Embedded in the Community	12
1.1 Contextualizing the Neighbourhoods we live & work in	12
1.2 How United Neighbours was Born & Ingredients Starting a Community Development Initiative	13
1.4 Building on Community Assets & the Importance of Inclusivity	18
2. Making Change Manageable: Small Working Groups	20
2.1 Environment & Beautification Working Group.....	21
2.2 Addictions & Mental Health Working Group.....	26
2.3 Youth Working Group	27
2.3.1 Youth Murals.....	28
2.3.2 The Power of Creativity: Slam Poetry & PhotoVoice in Youth Projects as a Best Practice	30
2.3.3: Crime Prevention and Providing Youth with Opportunities: Reflections from the Youth Working Group Co-chair	34
2.4 Community Safety Working Group	37

2.4.1 Crime Reporting: A Few Theories on Barriers to Reporting Crime.....	38
2.4.2 Fear of Retaliation	38
2.4.3 Marginalization.....	38
2.4.4 Power & Being in the “Know”	38
2.4.5 Neighbourhood Design	39
2.4.6 Community Safety Coffee Houses.....	39
2.4.7 How to Host a Coffee House in 6 Easy Steps	42
2.4.8 Other local research on reporting.....	44
3. Building Momentum: Integrating Community Needs & Learning’s from Various Projects	46
4. United Neighbours in the News: Good News Stories, Successes and Awards	48
5. Meaningful Impact: The Voices of United Neighbours	49
6. Reflections & Recommendations	51
Appendices.....	56
Appendix 1: United Neighbours Outreach Materials in 4 languages: English, French, Somali & Arabic.....	57
Appendix 2: Regina Towers Safety Tip Sheet	61
Appendix 3: United Neighbours Coffee Houses Survey	62
Appendix 4: My Call Makes a Difference Postcards (Front & Back)	63
Appendix 5: United Neighbours in the Media.....	64
Appendix 6: Group Agreements for United Neighbours Meetings.....	66

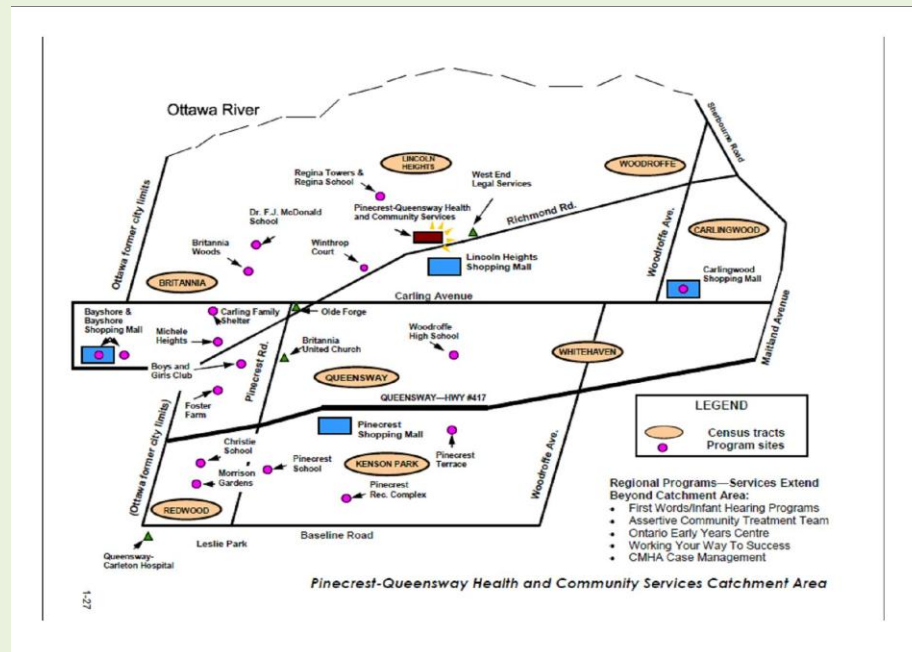
1. Roots of United Neighbours: Embedded in the Community

1.1 Contextualizing the Neighbourhoods we live & work in

The United Neighbours project has, over 7 years, worked in neighbourhoods in the West-end of Ottawa, specifically in the PQCHC catchment area. This area has a higher than average number of female lead single-parent families and a higher percentage of people who are well educated yet still living in low-income situations such as Internationally Trained Professionals. This is reflective of the reality faced by many immigrant families who arrive in Canada with professional qualifications not yet recognized in Canada. As a result, many highly educated professionals are unable to find work in their field and must resort to finding low-paying work in the service industry. These factors all contribute an overall lack of cohesion in the area, with many people living in a small area together, yet not engaging in neighbourhood life or contributing to improve how life is lived in this community.

- Higher than average levels of poverty
- Higher than average number of unemployed and underemployed
- Higher than average number of youth and seniors
- 43% of youth were born outside of Canada
- 80% of parents were born outside of Canada
- 83% of families headed by lone parent

Communities Matter, CCSD, 2011; Pathways to Education 2012; Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, 2010



The PQCHC catchment area has a large proportion of residents living in social housing communities. Many of these individuals are new Canadians. Through the work of the Centre and through the results of related needs assessments, a number of issues and service gaps have been identified that have a direct impact on the youth and their families in the community. Among these issues were concerns that youth were at greater risk of being involved in criminal activity due to challenges associated with social isolation, racism, intergenerational conflict, challenges accessing linguistically and culturally appropriate services, and barriers to accessing employment.

1.2 How United Neighbours was Born & Ingredients Starting a Community Development Initiative

In late 2006, residents in our catchment area in the West end of Ottawa expressed concerns that there were an increasing number of youth involved in crime or exposed to criminal activity. Of particular interest was the suspected involvement of youth in gang activity and the drug trade. Community residents voicing these concerns raised many apprehensions around crime and safety among area residents. There was also concern about how particular risk factors in this area impacted upon youth who were engaging in anti-social and illegal activities. Previous safety audits documented a number of disturbing incidents in the catchment area such as graffiti, vandalism, fighting, drug use and drug dealing.

In response to these concerns, and in collaboration with the broader community, PQCHC started a community mobilization initiative called “United Neighbours” to engage all sectors of the community in identifying factors that lead to criminal activity and developing solutions to address the problem. Community mobilization is a strategy used to engage and empower stakeholders to make a change in their community. This community building process sought to bring together community members, community leaders, service providers, law enforcement and local businesses in an effort to define goals and objectives and increase their responsibility for positive community changes.

The United Neighbours project has worked to build community capacity by enhancing relationships, integrating various cultural and language groups within the neighbourhood as is evident through the number of people who initially and have subsequently, contributed to our efforts and have joined in the mobilization efforts of United Neighbours. One of the first steps we took in creating United Neighbours was to develop a strong steering committee that could guide the project. The steering committee was comprised of 35 community members and leaders, service providers, private renters, homeowners, tenants associations, law enforcement and local business owners.

Those invited to sit on a steering committee will vary depending on the identified issues. What follows are some tips as to how to start your own steering committee and some lessons learned from our experience.

Ingredients Starting for a Community Development Initiative

Build upon your Existing Assets: Because of the existing relationships and rapport that PQCHC had established within the community and various community partners we were lucky to have a good foundation to begin from, and while we strengthened existing partnerships we also established new ones through the help of diverse steering committee members and new ideas around how to engage a wider network of service providers, law enforcement, local businesses and community residents.

Time & Patience: One of the key learning’s that has been continually reinforced throughout the course of this project is that community development takes time and nurturing from all involved. All elements of the United Neighbours initiative have required endurance, trust building, positive energy, and uninterrupted evaluation and ‘checking-in’ with all involved within the community. Since each one of these

QUICKTIP

When starting a new community initiative, consider these questions: Who should be at the table? What are we asking for? Who is missing? Are we representative of the broader community? *How* will our initiative have the most positive impact? How will we know?

elements are dependent on a longer-term strategy to build a safer community, and each one can change from time-to-time, both the steering committee and the broader community have recognized and discussed at length the philosophy of United Neighbours as a *process*.

Be in the Process: The process of building a steering committee or working group is essential to community development. While we all want immediate results for our efforts to increase safety and build a healthier community, we have learned along with the steering committee, that building relationships and properly coordinating action plans takes time. Part of the process is first building trust, educating ourselves as to what the main issues are, and leveraging the relevant resources needed to carry any initiative forward.

Don't Rush: Similar to enjoying and being in the process, when building a new committee of any type, it is essential to take the necessary amount of time to plan and solicit feedback and ideas from everyone around the table. Take time to ensure that everyone who "should" be included is included and there is representation from a diverse cross-section of the community and ensure to the best of your ability (using your networks) that the steering committee is representative of the general population you want your initiative to benefit from.

Be Prepared for Conflict & Build Strategies into the Process: The process in its entirety ought to be one of mobilization, trust building, greater inclusion, and in our case, the harvesting and testing of new ideas from the community on how to reduce crime and increase feelings of safety, security, and connectedness among neighbours. Expect conflict and differing ideas and opinions on how to approach a particular issue- this is a good thing and completely necessary in order for everyone to be aware of the diversity of issues as well as the diversity of approaches to problem-solving and solution-seeking. One way to prevent or handle conflict when it arises is to ask the group to establish their own "ground rules" or "group agreements" that the chair or facilitator can refer back to when needed (Appendix 6 for example of what our group decided would be their agreements).

Community Engagement: In collaboration with all partners at the table, develop a detailed community engagement strategy in consultation with the expertise of the Steering Committee. Make a plan for outreach and community engagement processes that include community consultations to further understand specific issues of concern to residents. This is a critical step in the community building process and will involve creating a vision for the community that addresses the issue of area-specific crime.

Action Plan Development: Collaborative action plans ought to highlight realistic and effective strategies that can be implemented and supported by ongoing community mobilization efforts, and be sustainable. It is always a good

idea to make time in steering meetings where people can report and provide updates and “good news” stories about what they are doing and a review of effective best practices as well. This creates a learning opportunity for residents and community partners alike.

Be aware of your Human Resources: While the United Neighbours project was always intended to be community-driven and community-led, if not for a staff person to coordinate and facilitate the process, organize meetings, type minutes, plan events in collaboration with the small working groups, many of the initiatives would have either taken a whole lot longer to plan and implement or perhaps not have happened to the same degree. In light of this, while we promote and expect residents to take a leadership role in creating a safer more beautiful community, to create the solid foundation necessary for this process to succeed, it was essential to have staff to support and coordinate these activities.. It is very challenging to get a lot done in a short period of time based solely on volunteer hours. It is the reason why building sustainability into all programs and planning is of utmost importance. We have been very fortunate to have paid staff who can carry the administrative and much of the organizational part of the project so as to have volunteers, co-chairs and steering members be available to work on the actual implementation of an event and enjoy it. It is important to “check in” with volunteers and students working on community projects to avoid volunteer burn-out which occurs when residents become overwhelmed with their own projects or issues and contributing too much of their time to volunteering. Many of our volunteers work on several different projects at once. For this reason it is always a good strategy to ensure that the weight of the “to do” list is being shared amongst many people.

Collectively Determined Objectives: From the outset, the United Neighbours project had four central objectives that were established by a steering committee in conjunction with PQCHC which are as follows:

1. To build community capacity and cohesion by engaging all sectors of the community in crime prevention activities regardless of income level or neighbourhood.
2. To identify factors associated with youth involvement with criminal activity in Ottawa’s west end.
3. To identify effective (best) practices and program strategies to prevent crime and promote community safety as it relates to youth involvement in criminal activity.
4. To develop a sustainable long-term action plan including realistic and holistic strategies that can be implemented through ongoing community mobilization and community engagement.

The positive momentum that has been built over several years is a testament to the success of the United Neighbours project, and this momentum can be attributed to the relationships that have taken years to build within the area, among residents and the many partnerships established through PQCHC. Through current PQCHC programming including extensive outreach activities, project staff has been equipped with a strong understanding of the community and acute awareness of issues that arise, such as hearing about concerns that youth are being lost in our society and that there is a scarcity of available support services to assist families and youth. We have started from the premise that the extent to which neighbours look out for one another directly affects how safe and healthy a community will be. For this reason, United Neighbours has focused our energy on bringing people together to discuss and address issues that are relevant to them, raise awareness of assets and resources in the community, and, increase people's quality of life and sense of safety within their neighbourhoods.

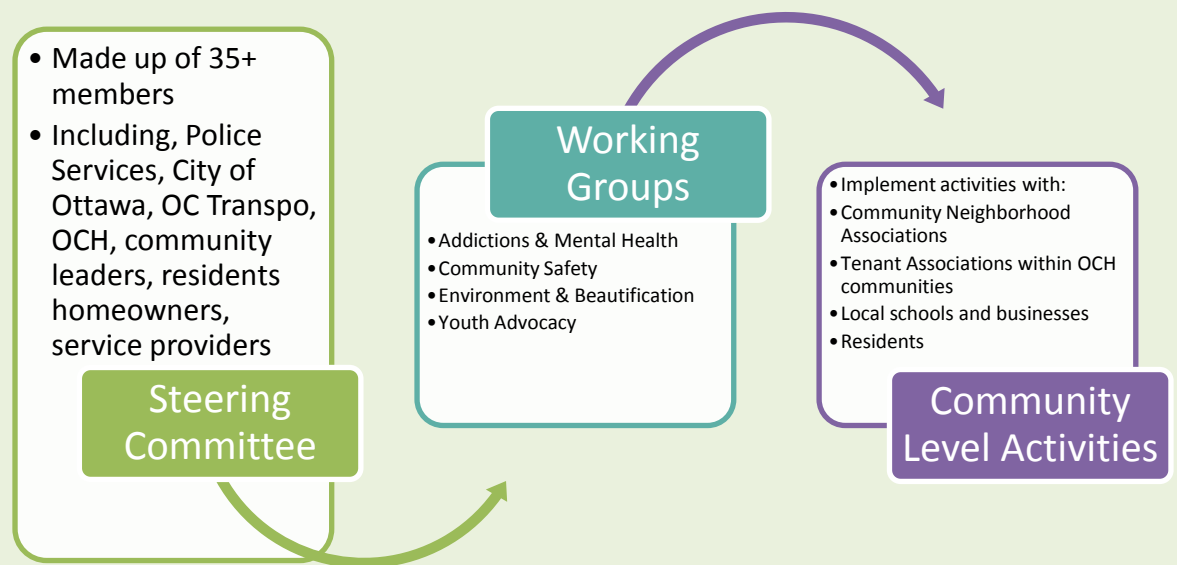


Figure 1: How United Neighbours Works

The United Neighbours approach to crime prevention is that we work from a community development lens in the work we do. We begin from the framework that if people are engaged in their communities, they will feel safer. A community development approach promotes that individuals and communities identify problems in their lives, find solutions and act to achieve them and recognizes that community participation and control over environment is health enhancing. In our crime prevention work through a community development lens, we focus on the notion of self-help, mutual support and the development of neighbourhood capacities for problem-solving. We have used the method of Participatory Action Research (PAR) in much of our research, survey work and all of the community initiatives we have carried out over the years. PAR- which has been the approach through which all of our UN activities and research projects have been carried out, helps to lay a solid foundation for our work in the community- thus reflecting the philosophy of community development that we work from. Participatory being the key word, United Neighbours has worked to take the lead from resident's experiences as we recognize that that the real expertise comes from the community.



Figure 2: United Neighbours Planning Retreat

1.4 Building on Community Assets & the Importance of Inclusivity

Similarly, what United Neighbours has done could be categorized as *Asset Based Community Development* (ABCD) which focuses on community strengths, assets and resources over problems, challenges and needs, to achieve positive outcomes. It works to best inform us how we work with community leaders and partners to identify and build on neighbourhood assets. For an initiative like this to be successful it needs to come from the heart of the community and be inclusive of all members of the community. We know that community members have varying levels of expertise and interests that are really hidden treasures within the community. It is our role, as a collective, to highlight the assets, creativity, knowledge and expertise within the community and bring it to the surface so as to emphasize the richness of our community and utilize these resources. *Everyone in the community has something to offer.* For example, while someone may have little interest in participating in meetings, they may be willing to contribute through writing, door-to-door outreach, cooking, crafts, community gardening, helping with a website or social media, and so on. We have learned that everyone (community members and partners) involved in United Neighbours has an important skill set to share and there is a place for everyone.

In line with this, we also know that increasing the participation of diverse language and ethno-cultural groups and broadly disseminating and translating information is of vital importance to community-building. The need to more deeply explore crime and safety issues was identified through multi-lingual community-based surveys (English, French, Arabic & Somali). We focused on recruiting new United Neighbours participants that are representative of the colourful, diverse and multicultural communities we work in.

As mentioned earlier, in terms of volunteers and staffing for the project, we were very fortunate to be in a position to hire a full-time Project Coordinator who was at times assisted by 2 part-time outreach workers tasked with outreach efforts in recruiting more Arabic and Somali speaking residents, many of whom are newcomers to Canada or had not previously been active voices in their community's development or crime prevention initiatives. These outreach workers distributed United Neighbours outreach materials (in French, English, Somali, and Arabic, see Appendix 1) to 6 different neighbourhoods in our catchment area door-to-door and speaking one-on-one with area residents in their native language to solicit their concerns about their environment, beautification, addictions issues and safety within their communities. As a result of receiving direction and opinions from a much more culturally representative audience we have been able to shift the ways in which we plan, implement, invite and evaluate the nature of our work and the impacts it has on residents in our area. This concentration on cultural and linguistic inclusivity has enriched the nature of the United Neighbours project in wonderful ways.

QUICKTIP: If you are not in a position to hire staff who speak various languages, ask your community members and volunteers if they are willing to translate outreach materials or translate at community events.

We also learned that in community-based initiatives like United Neighbours, especially when carrying out needs assessments and research, in order to reach a broader population (from the very young, to those who may not speak English), it is a best practice to cater to various learning styles. While some may not prefer the written word or filling out an evaluation form or survey they may be more likely to participate if you have several mixed methods as options. For instance, you can use pictures, PowerPoint slides, Body Maps, PhotoVoice, World cafes, instead of, or in addition to, written materials. One of our greatest successes is that we have increased the participation of diverse language and cultural groups as a result of better dissemination and translation of information and materials to the entire community. Our UN flyer, promotional and recruitment materials are regularly distributed in English, Arabic, Somali and French throughout our social housing

neighbourhoods. For instance, over 1500 households received "Who To Call?" flyers (examples attached in appendices) and were spoken with directly (in English, Arabic, and Somali and French) at their home. The intention was to educate residents about who to call regarding issues and concerns that they had (i.e: housing security, the police, Crimestoppers etc.). Additionally, residents become encouraged to report crime, keep file numbers, and stay informed about crime, drugs and violence issues in their neighbourhood, as well as learning how to "follow-up" on the cases they do report.

United Neighbours have reinforced the fact that when it comes to community development and approaching health and community wellness initiatives, the



Figure 3: Community Clean-up day at Winthrop Community House and Park

process is as important as the outcome. The process changes perceptions, knowledge and unfolds new ideas. We have learned that the community is better equipped to deal with many issues that affect them. We have also learned that it is key to have the people who the initiatives are intended to impact *lead* the initiative and that we continue to "check-in" and revise plans as needed through the working groups and steering

committee. Building solid relationships with community members, local businesses, politicians, schools, law enforcement and other

partners is instrumental to the success and sustainability of the project activities.

It is important that everyone can feel comfortable to take part in planning, revising, brainstorming and checking-in about how they feel the project is going. Organizational successes of our project that we are proud of are: steering committee and working groups setting aside time to do a fun group or teambuilding activity; having clear group agreements on how we work together; and doing a check-in around people's thoughts or concerns.

2. Making Change Manageable: Small Working Groups

Once we established a Steering Committee and began community consultations and survey research we learned from the community that all of the issues they identified fell into one of four categories: Mental Health and Addictions; Community Safety; Environment and Beautification and Youth Advocacy. In response to the community outlined areas of concern that needed more resources and attention, we designed 4 "Working Groups" that would in essence, be comprised

of residents, community partners and key decision makers around each table. The Working Groups each take on, plan, implement and evaluate activities related to their topic area.

Working groups meet once a month/ bi-monthly to plan activities. They are co-chaired by United Neighbours staff and one community member. Every 2nd month the Steering Committee comes together and the small Working Group co-chairs “report back” to the larger committee, providing updates, learnings and good news stories. The importance of sharing lessons learned and best practices with other organizations that are embarking on similar projects cannot be underestimated. A vast and thorough outreach plan is of paramount importance. United Neighbours continuously share with community development workers at other organizations and Community Health and Resource Centre’s (CHRC).

The following sections outline various case studies, activities and community initiatives about what each working group does.

2.1 Environment & Beautification Working Group

One of the objectives of the Environment and Beautification Working Group is to develop *sustainable* longer-term community action plans with the view to beautify neighbourhoods as well as sending the message of solidarity and pride that we are a cohesive community that cares about what our neighborhoods look and feel like.

This sense of ownership, belongingness, and pride of place has historically proved effective in preventing crime, particularly when we look to the “Broken Windows” theory of crime that originated in New York City in the 1990s. The theory is based on the idea that broken windows, litter and graffiti breed more disorder and that if people stop caring or dealing with (metaphorical) broken windows around them (i.e.: crime, garbage, graffiti), it sends the message that no one is watching, monitoring, or *cares* what is happening, thus making it highly likely that the vandalism, graffiti and crime will only continue. Results from a study published in *Science*¹ illustrate that people are much more inclined to litter, steal and trespass when it seems other people have been breaking the rules: “The mere presence of graffiti more than doubled the number of people littering and stealing,” claim social psychologist Kees Keizer and his research colleagues at the University of Groningen. Members of our Working Group could tell you the same thing, from lived experience; their efforts have been effective because they are working to eliminate, and better yet, *prevent* ‘broken windows’ through beautification efforts.

¹ “The Spreading of Disorder” Keizer, K., Lindenberg, S., Steg, L. *In Science* December 2008: Vol. 322 no. 5908 pp. 1681-1685

This working group has focused on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Pride, essentially, sending the message that maintaining a beautiful environment is of vital importance in preventing crime and that if we want to deter vandalism, litter and theft we need to send a clear message that someone is here and cares about this space. For example, the Foster Farm community was having many challenges about the cleanliness of their community and reports had been filed with Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) about cleanliness, pest control and overall dissatisfaction with their OCH building and row homes. Residents approached ACORN, OCH and United Neighbours to assist in finding solutions to these challenges. Each agency, project staff and residents had several planning meetings and worked together to plan a Community Clean-Up Day which was well-attended by area residents. We proved to residents and ourselves, as service providing agencies, that when we come to the table and listen to one another and act on community-identified concerns, we can achieve a harmonious outcome for all. We had a large event where with information booths, a free community BBQ, live music and entertainment and activities for children.

The Environment and Beautification Working Group also piloted a new way of engaging residents to raise funds for a park they wanted to develop in the Winthrop Court area. United Neighbours & Winthrop Court residents launched a drop-in that was held every Tuesday where residents could come and make arts and crafts out of found and recycled products with the view to hold an art show/ craft fair at the end. This series was called “The Broken Teacup Society.” We had local artists come and facilitate or lead certain artful activities and residents eagerly attended these workshops on a weekly basis. At the end of that season (the Society is still ongoing), 3 craft fairs were held where residents showcased their art and sold it to raise funds for the development of their park.

In the meantime, there was lots of coverage and momentum going on about the need for a park and residents and the house coordinator at Winthrop had been engaging their local Councillor Mark Taylor about this need. While the Broken Teacup Society and craft fairs were taking place, the residents were working behind the scenes with their Councillor to develop their wish list, come up with a budget and meet with architects who would come to design the park. In the Spring of 2012 the Councillor announced he would support the development of the park and the ground will be broken in the spring on 2013. The park was completed in the fall of 2013. The house coordinator and residents of Winthrop Court had been working on



Figure 4: Handmade art from the Broken Teacup Society that were sold in fundraising efforts

this plan for years, and, through United Neighbours advocacy and the development of the Broken Teacup Society, residents became even more deeply engaged to actively raise funds and awareness for the park. When the park was being prepared to be officially opened, residents held a “naming contest” and collectively chose to name the new area “Inspiration Park.” For residents in the area, it surely remains an inspirational story that the community will pride itself on for years to come.



Figure 5: United Neighbours was recognized by Crime Prevention Ottawa for successful “Community Group” award

In 2012, The United Neighbours Environment and Beautification Working Group was awarded a Crime Prevention Ottawa award for “Community Group” for the collective efforts of the Pinecrest-Terrace Community House Board, the Morrison Gardens Community House, Winthrop Court and Regina Lane Tenants Associations working together to beautify their neighbourhoods. The group has helped to enhance community safety by working with communities in Ottawa’s West-End to take ownership and pride within their individual and collective spaces by planning and implementing a variety of initiatives such as:

- Workshops on organic gardening in partnership with *Just Food* in local Community Gardens
- Community Safety Audits & Working in partnership with Ottawa Community Housing & Tenants Associations to ensure CEPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) audits are carried out and followed up on
- Community Clean-Up Days & regular participation in City of Ottawa “Spring Clean the Capital”
- Building and maintenance of community gardens
- “Take Back Regina Lane” Safety and Speed Reduction Initiative
- The building of a play structure at Pinecrest Terrace, a social housing community that was awarded a “Let Them be Kids” sponsored by *Kool Aid* grant

The Working Group has gone to great lengths to enhance community safety by continuing to focus on the concept of beautifying community, engaging the people to make their mark, and more importantly, ensuring that lessons and best practices and experiences can be shared with other community partners and

communities across Ottawa in order to outline what works and how it can be replicated in other communities, by anyone, of any age, anytime.

The Environment & Beautification Working Group has planned dozens of activities over the past several years. One such activity was planning a series of cooking, gardening, canning sessions in partnership with Ottawa-based *Just Food* and the Community Houses. The purpose of these sessions is to support individuals in the community to participate in the several community gardens around the community. These sessions were also good for people who are trying to experiment with gardening for the purpose of food production. Community gardens are becoming more and more popular and provide people opportunities to connect with fellow gardeners, produce food for their own consumption, and most importantly, contribute to the overall beautification of one's neighbourhood. It has been noted that individuals who are engaged in their community and communities which are well maintained, free of garbage and are esthetically pleasing see decreases in vandalism and graffiti.

This Working group also planned and implemented an outdoor "Green Event" that attracted 80 people of all ages from the community by applying for City of Ottawa Civic Events funding, which any community group can apply for in partnership with a local organization. As part of the event an information fair was organized comprised of several booths from various agencies including Crime Prevention Ottawa, Ottawa Fire Services, Ottawa Police Services, Ottawa Community Housing, Rotary Club, Hydro Ottawa, and the Enviro Centre. We also provided information, pamphlets and freebies from City of Ottawa Recycling and the Buy Local Food Guide as well as other social service agency pamphlets. People who attended the event were able to gather lots of information about how to cut down on their energy use, hydro and water bills and buy local food. Attendees all received energy saving light bulbs as well as cloth grocery shopping bags. To make the event even more family-friendly, we had local Ottawa band "Junkyard Symphony" for entertainment who did a 1 hour interactive performance that included many youth from the audience. The Junkyard Symphony was very entertaining and received much praise from event goers. There were many activities that were carried out that cost little money including: tables where kids and youth could make crafts such as musical instruments out of "found objects" and making dream catchers out of recycled materials. Youth and adults alike enjoyed having their face painted at a face painting booth. The Civic Event held at Winthrop Court was well attended and enjoyed by people of many ages who live within Winthrop Court and the surrounding neighbourhoods. People really enjoyed being out in the sunshine, visiting the info booths and talking to their children about the art from found objects as well as the Junkyard Symphony's instruments which were all from re-used and recycled materials. The idea was to provide a day of free family entertainment, information and food for all members of the community so as to bring people outside, meet their neighbours and create new friendships and trust among

community members in order to increase feelings of safety and respect and pride for their environment. The day was a great success at each of these levels.



PhotoVoice Picture from “HYPE” Youth Project:

Why is it always dirty? Makes me want to see those better days.
Why can't we just clean it up? I walked by a crusty swimming pool
Observing it I figured it wasn't cool
We should do as we are taught in school.
That is to recycle and keep the Earth cool.
~HYPE participants Bashir & Hamdi

In terms of the positive use of public spaces, United Neighbours co-chair for the Youth Working Group, Bill Robinson said that he believed that Councillor Taylor's initiative on Inspiration Park and his Rotary Club's involvement would have a highly positive long-term effect on the quality of life of the Winthrop Court community. Community House Coordinator Christine Verlup partnered with United Neighbours to lead workshops with their Tenant Circle and hosted Coffee Houses which were well attended. Residents felt it had been very beneficial and helpful to them and hope to have more workshops in the future as “these are a great exploratory tool for community engagement and an on-the-spot needs assessment that is relevant to the neighbourhood- quick, easy, and accurate.”



Figure 6: An outdoor Coffee House at Foster Farm

2.2 Addictions & Mental Health Working Group

This working group also has carried out activities such as hosting forums about Mental Health or Addictions issues as requested by the neighbourhoods. One of these was called “F.A.C.T. (Families and Communities Together) which included a community dinner and discussion. The focus for the evening was to highlight the negative impacts of substance abuse. Collaborating with community partners such as Rideauwood Addictions Centre, Dave Smith Centre for Addictions, Ottawa Boys and Girls Club, Ottawa Police Services, Youth Services Bureau, the forum offered rich information from various service providers sharing their points of view. This was an opportunity for families to come together, share in the entertainment provided by area youth and hear from experts in the field of addictions. This forum was in response to United Neighbours hearing from parents that they do not know what to do if their young person is using drugs or alcohol; not knowing who to call, or what the signs are if their child is actively using drugs or alcohol. Events like this one help to support parents and youth and provide a safe entry point into the conversation and to have professional experts answer what are oftentimes, stigmatized and difficult questions.

In response to community need and requests, The Mental Health and Addictions Working Group also planned and implemented a forum on Mental Health specifically for Somali parents. This forum was effectively planned to bring together experts on mental health, addictions and prevention and featured a panel of experts on the topic. The forum was held in the Somali language, there were over 80 parents and teens who attended. A keynote speaker that evening was a local youth whose brother had been lost in street life and drugs and he performed a slam poem for the audience about how his brother’s drug use and untreated mental health issues

impacted him, his family, and his tight-knit community. We received excellent feedback through evaluation and the demand remains for us to hold other forums of a similar nature.

The Working Group members (including staff and community partners) take training sessions as well. For example, the RCMP's "Kids & Drugs" 3-day training- a "train the trainer" workshop over 3 days, which has a sustainability component built in for knowledge-transfer and training of other staff and education sessions with youth. Subsequently, in partnership with the Ottawa Police, United Neighbours hosted a "Kids & Drugs session solely for parents, whereby parents could ask any questions about signs and symptoms of drug use in their youth, ways youth tend to act when on drugs, where they tend to hide or how they carry drugs. Police brought current factsheets and modes of disguising drugs to show parents.

Additionally, our Addictions and Mental Health Working group created a postcard (attached) that acts as a resource card for residents living in Ottawa's West-end to know who to call for help when someone is in crisis or if they need assistance with a youth who is involved in drugs or having mental health issues. The postcard is distributed broadly and people often put it on their fridge as a quick resource guide for any questions or crises around mental health and addictions. The Working group has created a series of pamphlets on Mental Health and Addictions resources on a wide variety of topics ranging from Alcoholism, Teen Drug Use: Signs and Symptoms; Season Affective Disorder; Fentanyl (all of which can be accessed through PQCHC) . These pamphlets are distributed throughout the community with a clear and cohesive outreach plan with our community House Coordinators, community partners and residents. The working group also developed a "Traveling Library" which consists of various resources, book, pamphlets and videos on topics related to mental health and addictions. Residents or staff can sign out this travelling library (simply, a suitcase on wheels) and bring to community events, meetings, tenant circles or the community houses. It is an easy, affordable, accessible way to get information out into the community and United Neighbours or any other community leader can take an active role in doing so. We attached a few of these pamphlets to give you an idea of how they might be useful to you in your community, and/ or use as a template or launching point to create your own.

2.3 Youth Working Group

As the needs and concerns of residents, partners and United Neighbours shifted, and based on group reflection and UN Retreats, we created a working group specifically focused on youth and youth issues. The group continues to consult with youth in our catchment area to plan what it is youth need. The group consults with area youth and staff working with youth to determine the current and relevant

resources that are missing or needed and have often had a committee of youth drive and feed into the direction and planning of future activities.

This working group, with the support of placement students from our local universities, has been able to carry out and evaluate a youth focused project that revolved around building self-esteem and identifying and addressing personal barriers to success that youth were having, all through creative arts and poetry. A workbook was made, which can be used for future projects by anyone who wishes to use the modules, and all youth got a copy and worked with staff and students on a weekly basis to build their public speaking skills, self esteem and become more confident. The youth did this through the medium of Slam Poetry which they later performed at a large all-girls day forum "Girls World," an annual day that United Sisters (A PQCHC team) puts together.

The Community Safety and Youth Working Groups also helped to plan a series of Safety workshops/ youth talks at "Pathways to Education" tutoring programs at 4 sites in our catchment area. Crimestoppers, OC Transpo and Ottawa Police were present to engage youth in dialogue on reporting, bullying, street safety and transit safety/ reporting crime on the transit way. These community partners do make themselves available for workshops and community talks, all you need to do is ask!

In this section we highlight some of our most successful initiatives for youth and emphasize that the various methods employed yielded diverse solutions and approaches to issues that youth identified in the neighbourhoods. We underscore that using creative methods and innovative group processes is a best practice we've used when working with youth.

2.3.1 Youth Murals

Based on the premise that there is a solid link between one's environment, pride in their community and crime/vandalism, youth-led mural projects build upon the assets within the community, namely the artistic vision and experiences of the youth to explore their community and work closely with residents to transform a plain space into a colourful, creative and beautified one for all to see. United Neighbours staff and volunteers carried out 3 murals over the past few years, all with the support of the City of Ottawa's "Paint it Up" program and Crime Prevention Ottawa. These are worth mentioning here for their deep-rooted positive visual impact and longevity.

Youth murals work to enhance the unity of the community, promote safety through beautification, and most importantly, increase a sense of ownership of the community because the youth have personally invested their ideas, time, and energy into creating the mural and



Figure 7: Youth in focus group planning & designing their "Paint it Up!" Community Mural

therefore decrease the chances of vandalism and further graffiti.

There are significant concerns within the Foster Farm community about tagging and graffiti. Spaces, such as the front of the Recreation Centre or utility boxes or playground areas are often targeted by tags and graffiti. The working group has worked hard to beautify and bring colour, youth ownership, and pride into some of these unoccupied public spaces, such as a brick wall that area youth did do a mural on. The “Fostering Peace and Safety” mural is chiefly preventative in nature in that when youth take the lead in planning, designing and maintaining the mural, the expectation is that they will take more pride in their recreation centre and their community in general. The Foster Farm (City of Ottawa) Recreation Centre is a hub in the community. The collaborative mural worked to enhance the physical appearance of the recreation centre, as well as open a larger dialogue about strategies to enable people to ‘feel’ better and safer about their environment. Action plans that were developed promoted and encouraged an ongoing respect for the mural itself as well as the surrounding environment. Most importantly, the mural added colour and reflects the true essence of the community, reflecting all groups of people who live within it.



Figure 8: Youth atand in front of their newly designed mural on carling Avenue, supported by “Paint it Up!” project (City of Ottawa and Crime Prevention Ottawa)

We engaged local youth in this mural project by means of a large focus group with youth in the community and youth who are participating in the Foster Farm day camp program to plan, discuss, execute and showcase the mural. The professional artist assisted area youth in several aspects of creating, developing ideas, and executing the mural from beginning to end. The task was to inspire, assist and support youth. Through our initial youth meetings and focus groups, staff and

artists helped youth develop a concept and brainstorm getting suggestions from the youth, similar to creating a patchwork quilt. The youth involved in the any mural projects learned the tools of the trade as well as the social responsibilities they had in this endeavor: to plan, implement and carry out a project from beginning to end. Youth came away with new learning's, developed new friendships the process was useful in terms of breaking down cultural and religious stereotypes which can assist in reducing hate-related crimes in the future.

Any community-based project that focuses on youth is a positive thing, however especially those projects that leave a "mark" are particularly impactful and positive.

2.3.2 The Power of Creativity: Slam Poetry & PhotoVoice in Youth Projects as a Best Practice

As we mention above, innovation is necessary when working with youth from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds . We have learned that approaching youth identified problems requires creativity and patience, and thinking "outside of the box" is a necessary best practice. We wish to highlight the HYPE project to illustrate the utility and power of art and poetry, and additionally demonstrate that youth will talk about deep issues when you provide them with relevant tools and mediums through which to express themselves. We use slam poetry² and PhotoVoice³ as the main methodologies within this project.

The HYPE project for youth was an exciting artful initiative that consisted of drop-ins and workshops about journalism, media training, conflict resolution, magazine production, slam poetry and photography. Youth were provided a forum to learn about many skills, and practice and perform these through drop-in's about various topics. The HYPE project took place 1 evening per week for 8 weeks at a Community Centre and had a total of 15 male and female participants. The drop-in's consisted of various guest speakers such as slam poets and journalists as well as a variety of workshops and educational pieces of interest to the youth. Youth used

² Simply put, slam poetry is the competitive art of performance poetry. It puts dual emphasis on writing and performance, encouraging poets to focus on what they're saying and how they're saying it

³ PhotoVoice is a participatory photography technique that aims to bring positive social change by: promoting self-development through creativity and expression; advocacy by enabling participants to become advocates for change; promoting a better standard of living by providing training in photography skills.

their newfound journalism skills working as photojournalists at PQCHC's Centre's 9th Annual Diversity event . The youth went around the event asking people questions about diversity and documented their answers which will be used throughout the centre to summarize people's experience of the event. Through pre- and post- self assessment surveys, we learned that the youth who participated in the HYPE program were better equipped to be engaged within their school and community and reported learning a lot about themselves through the themes that were covered during the workshops and drop-in.

Youth created many awe-inspiring, beautiful and thought-provoking artifacts based on their newfound skills. A mini magazine was created to showcase the collected works from youth who participated in the HYPE program which was later distributed to the broader community. Participants from the HYPE program also performed at a subsequent Parenting Forum organized by United Neighbours. What follows are a few examples of the youth's poetry and PhotoVoice captions that we have taken from the mini magazine that was published through the HYPE project. A theme that sews their many works together is that of a pride in their community, a questioning about sense of safety in public space and their desire to have their neighbourhood viewed in a more positive light. The entries below illustrate how youth wish for their community to be understood and seen:

What's in a Name?

Photovoice by: Hana Mohamoud & Amal Mader

When you hear Penny Dr what comes to mind?

It's surprising to hear things like violence, gangs or drug dealers linked with Penny Drive. We hear this is the view of those who live outside of our community. We add that those who have this view know no nothing about Penny Drive.

Firstly, the community is called Michele Heights. It is located between Carling Ave and Richmond Road. It's culturally and economically diverse. The children and youth spend their time playing in the Michele Park, hanging out at the community House or attending programs offered by Pinecrest Queensway and the Michele Heights Community Centre.

We see a growing neighbourhood, with different nationalities coming together, learning from each other and building a great Canadian community. By all means Michele Heights (Penny Dr) is not a perfect community. But we can assure you that it's not "ghetto" or "violent". Yes, the residents face many challenges; some of these challenges could be because



of the fact everyone in OUR community is looking for a way out and is looking for a better job to support their family. Many of us here have come to Canada with little and our parents don't have very good jobs. So, this is what we could afford for now. Some of our friends have moved out to richer places like Barrhaven and bought houses, the rest of us are on our way but we could use a little support on our way up.

So, what it's in a name?

We discussed that a youth from our community may not get a job because of their address. So, you are telling us that we could be discriminated against based on where we live? The fairness of it all is a miss to us. Please keep an open mind about our community and any other community that is similar. Remember that 99.5% of the people who live there are as wonderful and smart like us.

***The Benches in the Park:* By Nagad Bakal & Ashley Grosse.**

These benches have gone through a lot over the years for us. They have seen many good and bad things. These benches look over our park and basketball court and see many people playing, laughing and having fun. But these are not your average benches, they are lost and are owned by a few who are up to no good.

What happens at these benches you may wonder?

All we can tell you is that what happens at these benches affects us because when some people smoke near the benches we breathe in this toxic smell. We also hear foul languages that shouldn't be heard. These benches are not meant to attract drugs and gangsters to start fights around us. Those who spend endless hours here should give the benches (and the rest of us!) a break and instead of some people who loiter around these benches doing violence they should be good role models for little kids who may look up to them, like us. The bench should be a place where people could go sit and have a good time. The park should be a place where we all have fun, not a place where we see some next level WWE smack down. Every year the bench gets fixed, but within a week it gets ruined again. In our own opinion we think someone should do something about this because one day it could get out of hand and something could go wrong or someone could get hurt. If a security guard or the police could just watch over the benches during the summer, then they'd feel the same way we feel, US THE KIDS OF PENNY.



We're All the Same

By Nagad

Are you black and white
Or are you colour blind?
How about you explain that to me
If you don't mind!
I walk around this world
Feeling pretty smart
But sometimes I'm surprised
That people don't have a heart
Don't call me names
Do you like giving people pain?
In God's eyes we're all the same
Whether you're black or while, we'll still write
We're all brothers & sisters in this world
And I know we are right
So why be racist?

This and other youth-driven projects that United Neighbours have carried out have approached issues such as race, class, gender politics and so on. The methods we use to work with youth such as poetry, photography and other art forms are a gentle and relevant way for youth to explore and express their feelings about often controversial topics in a way they feel excited about and can use with little intimidation. This is illustrated by the abovementioned work by young female youth in the HYPE project we carried out with local youth.

In line with increasing engagement of ethno-cultural groups and reducing barriers to participation, we have learned about innovative strategies which residents and partners use and the relevancy of using mixed methods in community-based projects such as this one. We have employed many methods in the work we have done that work to transgress boundaries of language, culture, age through the use of Safety Audits, PhotoVoice, and Body Mapping (through a related project, Women & Girls Eyes on the Neighbourhood) as well as workshops that do not solely focus on the written word, but on participation through art as well. Our use of these mixed methods in much of our work has helped to deepen residents understanding of crime and safety in a way that is useful and relevant to each community.

Another youth-driven initiative that United Neighbours facilitated was to create a youth scripted documentary about Somali youth living in Ottawa's West-end. Entitled "*Sahan*," this short documentary captured the peaceful, resilient, creative and engaged Ottawa Somali Community. The complex experience of immigration is highlighted including: identity, loss, home, culture, gender and of coping in a bi-cultural situation. In this film, they demonstrate self affirmation and resilience in their ability to cope within the pressures of the cultural, religious expectations. The film brings people on a journey of hope through the stories of transition and integration and the building of a new life here in Canada. Furthermore, this past year, the Youth Working group also:

- ☛ Helped to plan a series of 7 Safety Audits for young girls in the United Sisters program that takes place in Community Houses. These were guided by United Neighbours staff, Ottawa Police Constable and WISE staff (Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments).
- ☛ Organized "Kids & Drugs" sessions offered solely for parents, were facilitated by UN staff and Ottawa Police whereby parents could ask any questions about signs and symptoms of drug use in their youth, ways youth tend to act when on drugs, where they tend to hide or how they carry drugs. Police brought current factsheets and modes of disguising drugs to show parents.
- ☛ Developed postcards to promote youth-specific jobs and job websites.
- ☛ Focused on the sustainability of our UN initiatives by mainstreaming and integrating considerations into all of our action plans at steering meetings and small working group meetings.

2.3.3: Crime Prevention and Providing Youth with Opportunities: Reflections from the Youth Working Group Co-chair

We have carried out a number of youth engagement activities and initiatives over the years, some examples of these are addressed here. This section last section about the Youth Working Group was written by the group's co-chair and community volunteer, Bill Robinson:

For me, the way to prevent crime is to prevent criminals, and the way to prevent criminals is to have kids not become criminals in the first place. No kid starts out in life with the career goal of becoming a criminal. But kids will be what they can see. If all they see around them is crime, guess what. But if they see education, hope and opportunity, then just maybe they will overcome their negative surroundings. Too often we confuse crime *treatment* with crime *prevention*. Too often we treat the effects of crime rather than trying to prevent the *causes* of crime. To some extent, this is understandable. The effect is right there in front of us, right

now. Preventing the root causes of crime takes generations. But if we create opportunities for kids today, they will have even greater opportunities in the future. The purpose of the Youth Working Group has been to help create more opportunities for youth. The Youth Working Group started out with the mandate to improve the opportunities available to youth in the PQ catchment area and to encourage youth to participate in their community.

To accomplish this, we recruited a broad and ever-changing working group membership, including PQCHC employees, community house coordinators, police, representation from organizations working with youth, service clubs and youth themselves.

Our initial view of projects to achieve our mandate included:

- Positive ticketing
- Kindness Week
- Community Leadership programs
- Employment programs and events with businesses in the emerging BIA
- A United Neighbours Awards program that recognizes youth and business for their contributions

Our mandate has not changed since we started but our projects have, as a result of wide-ranging discussions at our first meetings. Some of our research pointed to a lack of job fairs and postings for West-end Ottawa youth. While publicizing job opportunities has always been important, the major project we took on was a job fair and this was a runaway success. We planned for 50 kids and 180 showed up. We had to scramble to get more pizza!

However, United Neighbours projects are only successful if they are sustainable. The job fair underlined the importance of youth employment opportunities, and this led to the creation of a PQ position focused on youth employment. Hopefully, this will permanently help our youth.

A best practice is for groups such as United Neighbours to try to develop partnerships with service clubs. Service clubs are often looking for good projects and often have time and funds to contribute. You just have to catch the attention of one or two members to get a start. I am a member of the Rotary Club of Nepean-

Kanata, and my club has been active in funding and helping with United Neighbours and related projects:

- ☛ Building a library at Michele Heights and donating a book each week to populate it.
- ☛ Contributing an annual \$1000 scholarship to a deserving Pathways student
- ☛ Funding a computer room redesign and 10 computers for Michele Heights
- ☛ Partnering in the launch of the Start It Up project, which provides training to youth starting up their own businesses.
- ☛ Sending two Pathways students to Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA), a leadership camp held in Lake Placid.
- ☛ Encouraging Kindness Week projects in each of the community houses.

Perhaps the biggest personal benefit of working on the UN project has been to raise my awareness of needs throughout the PQCHC catchment area. The biggest example of this is my Rotary Club's donation of a gazebo to the newly constructed "Inspiration Park" at Winthrop Court, a project that Councillor Mark Taylor was pivotal in helping to support and see

through to completion. We hope it will become the centre of the community by being used for many community activities such as tenants meetings, homework clubs, art classes, or simply having a cup of coffee or watching the kids in the playground. We hope it will contribute to building an even greater community in Winthrop Court.



Figure 9: UN Youth Working Group organized a Youth Job Fair, 185 youth participated

There are many potential future projects for the Youth Working Group

- ☛ Documenting and sharing best practices for homework clubs to help the community houses put on the best possible assistance for our younger kids.
- ☛ Creating virtual job fairs for our youth. Imagine if we can create a job fair where youth can talk to company reps via live chat, and submit their resumes through that chat. Imagine if companies can set up a virtual booth and don't have to spend the time and energy to transport their stuff to a physical location. Perhaps we could hold more job fairs and make them more accessible to both job seekers and job providers.
- ☛ Developing career adventures for our Pathways students at Carleton University, University of Ottawa and Algonquin College

To summarize, I believe that a few of the key elements and best practices of a successful working group are:

- ☛ Encouraging many different skills and backgrounds to join the group.
- ☛ Partnering with local organizations, especially service clubs.
- ☛ Creating projects that are sustainable, by building sustainability into the project plan.
- ☛ Being flexible. If something isn't working, try something else. Working groups should be test beds for ideas. Always strive to come up with the best.

2.4 Community Safety Working Group

There is a known fear and apprehension of many of our residents in Ottawa's West-end to call in and report incidents of concern. One reason being the overall real fear of retaliation, but the most common reason we hear about from residents is that they are not sure of "who" to call for what. One of the central ideas of the Community Safety Working group is to have representatives available from most of Ottawa's first response agencies to respond to questions and to provide residents information of their service and the process for which calls are responded too. Representatives from Ottawa Police Services, Crime Stoppers, By-Law services, OC Transpo, Ottawa Community Housing are all partners who sit on both the UN Steering Committee and the Community Safety Working Group. What follows are some case study examples and activities that this working group has carried out as well as highlighting the most common reasons people do not report, information

about Community Safety Coffee Houses and “How To” host one in your neighbourhood.

2.4.1 Crime Reporting: A Few Theories on Barriers to Reporting Crime

In working on crime prevention through community development one of the tools we have used to get a pulse on crime and safety issues is to host “Coffee Houses.” Tremendous effort goes into getting community members, the Ottawa Police Service, OC Transpo Security, Neighbourhood Watch, Ottawa Community Housing Security, and Crimestoppers to come together and discuss emerging issues in a casual format, usually at a Community House or Recreation Centre. Generally speaking, people do not like to report crime, and more often than not, don’t. Depending on who you ask, you’ll get a range of explanations as to why people don’t report crime as much as they could, or should. These are a few theories as to barriers to residents reporting crime. Keep these in mind when asking questions, encouraging reporting, and planning for a community meeting or Coffee House.

2.4.2 Fear of Retaliation

The topic of reporting crime dominates discussions at our Coffee Houses. Residents say they don’t report crime because of their fear of retribution from neighbours, or that someone will “know” they reported a crime, and/or that they do not want police showing up at their door. Despite reassurance from OPS that reporting is kept confidential, people still think they will get marked as being a “rat.” In other words, some people feel that reporting crime may put them at risk of being a victim of crime. This is the reality.

2.4.3 Marginalization

The areas we work in are brimming with diversity, creativity, and immeasurable assets, so too are these neighbourhoods peppered with individuals who are marginalized by race, class, language, and lack of opportunities. Residents may not report crime as they feel disenfranchised, don’t want to attract “trouble,” don’t want to reinforce stereotypes, or do not feel anyone will listen anyways. Many residents emigrate from countries where authorities are untrustworthy and corrupt and don’t yet believe they can trust authorities in this country. When it comes to strategizing how we can encourage more reporting, there are deeper layers that haven’t yet been broached, solutions to which must burrow into the veneer of trust building, cultural readiness, language barriers, and a feeling of responsibility to build a safe community.

2.4.4 Power & Being in the “Know”

Another idea around what stops people from reporting crime revolves around power, with a capital “P.” There’s no other way to say this than just as it is: Many people like gossip, secrets, and being in the know. As Michel Foucault once said “knowledge is power.” If you’re living in a rougher neighbourhood and you know that your neighbour is running a drug house and *he knows that you know...* your conscious choice not to report this can actually provide you with a (false or real) sense of safety under someone’s protective wing...an “I’ll scratch your back if your scratch mine” scenario.

2.4.5 Neighbourhood Design

Another root cause for underreporting can be attributed to living in very closer quarters- this mass of “vertical neighbourhoods” or apartment buildings that scatter the topography of Ottawa. Living in social housing buildings brings the benefit of connectedness and tight-knit community, yet it can also be a tumultuous relationship with living space stacked upon living space. We can appreciate why criminal activity is underreported if we understand these living conditions as vertical neighbourhoods and gain an appreciation of the stressors that come part and parcel with this.

Through our various forms of evaluation, residents reporting incidents of crime has increased as a result of the strong relationships with law enforcement, participation in community safety coffee houses and a deepened level of trust and relationships with staff over the past few years. Other initiatives that community members have taken up are to create their own neighbourhood-specific “Tip Sheets” in collaboration with service providers and partners. Residents in Regina Towers designed their own tip sheet that is relevant to their living situation in an apartment building (Appendix 2).



Figure 10: United Neighbours carry out a Community Safety door-to-door bag drop at Regina Towers



Figure 11: Neighbours and community partners unite to discuss crime & safety issues in their neighbourhood

2.4.6 Community Safety Coffee Houses

United Neighbours have hosted several Community Safety or Crime Prevention Coffee Houses in various neighbourhoods in English, Arabic and Somali and French. These Coffee Houses have been well attended by area residents and we actually had a

challenging time keeping up with the demand the communities had to host these more frequently. This “Coffee House” model has been a huge success and we see and hear the changes these make in terms of people’s feelings and perceptions of safety in their communities. Coffee Houses are very informal and all who attend create a welcoming, safe place to discuss issues of concern or share positive good news stories or events that are happening in their community. The Coffee Houses have, over the past several years, become an integral part of the community. While they were initially developed to address safety issues, they now broach a wide range of topics as a result of the 3 other working groups feeding into these. We have hosted Coffee Houses on a range of topics including mental health issues, Crimestoppers and addictions.

Based on feedback we heard from residents being afraid to report crime we developed a strong working partnership with Crimestoppers, By-Law, OC Transpo Special Constables, OCH Safety Officers, and the Ottawa Community Police Officers in our catchment area as we planned and implemented Coffee Houses that integrated or featured Police working with Crimestoppers. At these smaller intimate events, area residents have an opportunity to ask questions about the process and anonymity of reporting crimes to Crimestoppers and the officer has an opportunity to debunk the myths about Crimestoppers that residents may have. Through our evaluation processes and feedback, we know that this broad, accessible and safe community awareness raising and educational campaign does help to increase reporting and we continue to work closely with Crimestoppers, OC Transit Security, OCH Safety Officers, By-Law Officers and the Ottawa Police to co-host information nights or Coffee Houses on this topic.

It is important to note that a Coffee House can cater to any age group or topic. United Neighbours have hosted several of these just for youth. Youth enjoy meeting with their Community Police Officer or OC Transit Special Constables to ask questions about crime, harassment, safety measures or bullying. The Coffee Houses we have hosted that youth attend have always been very useful and enjoyable to them and they get the opportunity to build a trusting relationship with police in a non-issue based way. These Coffee Houses can take place at Community Houses or Community Centres in the cooler months and in the summer months we have held these Coffee Houses in public parks. On certain evenings within the communities you will find groups of residents, children, youth and the United Neighbours project staff coming together in a park to discuss issues of concern in the community. The information is shared amongst the group, and solutions are collectively decided with appropriate action taken. During the Coffee Houses, sometimes the participants will walk around their neighbourhood in a group to identify areas of concern or need for maintenance or more lights. These opportunities for people to walk together as a group show collective support for each other, and an underlining

FROM A UNITED NEIGHBOUR: Community House Coordinator, Denise Read from Winthrop Court has used the format of Crime Prevention Coffee Houses to build safety into her day-to-day work and the community. Winthrop Court has hosted many Coffee Houses over the past few years. Denise believes that Coffee Houses provide opportunities for the community to express their concerns, share information and meet community partners such as the Ottawa Police, Crime Stoppers and OCH Security. Denise also expressed “as a result of issues raised at one of the first Coffee Houses, Winthrop Court Community House engaged in two Safety Audits with WISE (Women’s Initiatives for Safer Environments) on Regina Lane and Winthrop Court. The safety audit in Winthrop was particularly successful with a large number of community members showing up, even on a cold rainy night. Many issues were identified such as poor lighting and hazards in the underground garages. “Ottawa Community Housing held community meetings to address the issues raised in the WISE report and many identified problems were addressed.

Denise Read, Community House Coordinator

message of not wanting to see negative behavior in their community parks, parking lots, and in front of their children. Those who converse at the Coffee Houses speak very openly of issues of drug trafficking, noise, and intimidating behavior. The outcome of these walks and meetings have been mutual support for each other, and an increased confidence among those in the community to call the appropriate authorities should they see issues of concern. Coffee Houses are open to anyone

living in the community, and we encourage more participation from others who want to see change in their community.

We pride ourselves on sharing our many successful initiatives in the hopes that other Ottawa residents might share their own strategies and challenges, thereby deepening the discussion about crime and safety in Ottawa communities.

We have become a model of best practice in our city. For example, through learning about our "Coffee Houses" residents in other areas of Ottawa (i.e.: Vanier) began carrying out Coffee Houses in their communities through the model we developed, implemented and evaluated. United Neighbours has become well recognized and admired throughout the City of Ottawa and beyond, and was highlighted

in a full article in CrimeSense magazine (2012) distributed across Ontario.

CrimeSense magazine has additionally asked the United Neighbours to write an article about United Neighbours and its impacts in the community in a Special Issue for spring 2014, another indication of the desire to learn from our work and share it more broadly.

FROM A UNITED NEIGHBOUR:

"Thanks to United Neighbours that we as a team are better equipped to refer our youth directly to UN staff and networks to help them get support in response to incidents they have faced"

Sue Merrill, Pathways to Education

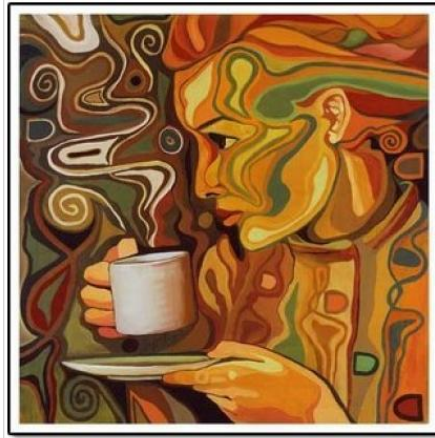
2.4.7 How to Host a Coffee House in 6 Easy Steps

1. Consult with community members to determine an area of need or topic they would like to address (i.e: Safety, Addictions, Mental Health, Youth drug use, or parenting)
2. Contact community partners you wish to attend & consult them about a good date and time. For a Community Safety Coffee House for instance, contact Police, Crimestoppers, By-Law, Transit Security. For a Mental Health or Addictions Coffee House., contact Addictions Services, Counselors, Addictions Specialists, local mental health intake service providers.
3. Choose a date, time and location (Community House, Community Centre, a park,)
4. Create a flyer (See Coffee House postcard below as an example), poster, email message, about 3 weeks in advance announcing the date, time and location (and topic, if you choose) and broadly disseminate through outreach efforts of staff, partners and residents. Use email list-serves. Tenant Association lists. Use social media as much as you can. Post in public spaces. Contact people by telephone and in person as it helps make a stronger connection.

5. The day of: Arrive to Coffee House location, bringing with you useful pamphlets, resources
 - a. Partners may wish to bring their own pamphlets, magnets, pencils, kids safety books
 - b. Make coffee and tea, provide light snack if you can
 - c. Welcome everyone as they arrive
 - d. Provide a sign-in sheet so people can be added to your list serve and be notified for future Coffee Houses and to be able to follow-up with them about actions on questions raised
 - e. Establish some very basic ground rules & respect guidelines the group agrees upon
 - f. Start with introductions and purpose of meeting
 - g. Open the floor for dialogue & questions for partners OR have each partner/ guest do a small overview of the services they provide, to get the conversation and questions going
6. Build an accessible evaluation tool into your Coffee Houses to ensure they are effective and modify as needed

Coffee House Postcard (Front & Back)

My Cup of Coffee Fights Crime, Does Yours?



Learn how to increase safety in your community by getting to know your neighbours and speaking with police, security and other professionals at our coffee houses. For more information, contact Robynn Collins at 613-820-4922 or r.collins@pqchc.com

EMERGENCIES & CRIMES IN PROGRESS

Life threatening emergency, fire, impaired driving. These violent or property crimes are in progress or just occurred and suspects were seen fleeing (you have a description and last direction).
Call: 9-1-1

Alcohol and drug use in public, suspicious activity or vehicle, youth under the age of 16 out between midnight and 6:00 am. Disturbance or a potential fight developing.
Call: 230-6211 (Ottawa Police)

Emergencies in relation to OC Transpo property
Call: 741-2478 (OC Transpo Special Constables)

Ottawa Paramedic Service & Ambulance
Call: 580-4771

Crime Stoppers
Call: 233-8477

VERY IMPORTANT

All 7 digit Ottawa phone numbers are preceded by area code (613). In order to track any incident you report and for efficient follow-up, a case number is required. Always get a case number from the staff you are reporting your concerns to at any of the numbers you call.

FOR NON-EMERGENCIES

For any by-law issue or any general city enquiry.
Call: 3-1-1

Bayshore Community Police Centre
Call: 230-6211 x 2345

Greenbank Community Police Centre
Call: 236-1222 x 2179

Ottawa Community Housing Corporation (OCHC)
Community Safety Service (4 pm - 8 am)
Call: 745-9277

OC Transpo Customer Service
Call: 842-3600

OC Transpo Special Constable Liaison Officer
Call: 842-3636 x 2646
(For matters not effectively resolved, a review may be requested and conducted by this officer)

Ottawa Police Call Centre
For reports after a crime (damage to house, yard or vehicle—not in progress)
Call: 236-1222 x 7300

If you live in Ottawa, you can find information about community, government and social services in your city.
Call: 2-1-1

2.4.8 Other local research on reporting

Other partner agencies including National Capital Area Crime Stoppers, Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) and Crime Prevention Ottawa (CPO) carried out a study in 2011 that explored reporting (or lack thereof) among vulnerable residents. The report revealed that individuals have a desire to report crime and public disorder but they do not want the negative repercussions that they feel may follow suit. As part of this project, six focus groups with vulnerable residents were

carried out. The focus groups were organized by OCH Community Development, Carlington Community Health Centre and the Hunt Club Riverside Community Centre and groups of youth, tenants and seniors were comprised of both males and females, many from multicultural communities in the Ottawa south and west areas. When asked why they do not report criminal and public disorder activities, *OCH tenants stated that:*

- Reporting was futile because by the time OCH Safety Officers or the Police arrived, the reported incident was over or the people involved have moved
- Everyone in the community could identify the person who contacted the authorities because the Police Officer or the OCH Safety Officer appears at the address of the person who made the report
- It is not clear whom tenants should call to make the report e.g. Police, 911, By-Law Services, OCH Safety Officer (p. 4, National Capital Area Crime Stoppers *Anonymous Reporting for Vulnerable Residents Report*, Elizabeth Kwan, Sept. 2011)

FROM A UNITED NEIGHBOUR:

"Through my involvement with United Neighbours I believe I have helped dispel the fear of reporting by explaining the work processes of the Ottawa Police Service. I had also numerous opportunities to mingle with community members and to advise them of the importance of reporting suspicious or criminal activity, which is essential in directing the day to day operations of police and to target problem areas. I feel that through our involvement with United Neighbours, our community partners possess a deeper understanding of police procedures, a deepened trust of police and a willingness to convince other residents to call police"

Sgt. Barb O'Reilly, Ottawa Police Service

As summarized in the Anonymous Reporting for Vulnerable Residents Report (2011), youth stated that their preferred method of contacting Crimestoppers to report crime is to use the telephone (mostly male youth), followed by texting (mostly female youth) and lastly, by email. The tools/resources identified by the youth groups as most effective were visual tools such as posters, pamphlets in different languages and stickers coupled with presentations by Crime Stopper (p. 3, Kwan). Youth also put forth ideas and strategies that may help to increase the awareness of Crimestoppers by means of: providing parents with Crime Stoppers info in different languages; engaging recent immigrants to increase their comfort level in reporting crime; to put information on Crime Stoppers in schools; to make presentations on Crime Stoppers in schools (p. 3 Kwan).

From the Pathways to Education team, we learned that as a result of their collaborations with United Neighbours and other partners, the Pathways team is

more aware of the various crime prevention organizations, initiatives and resources available to our students and their families. Pathways staff said that they focused time at their team retreat to reflect more on community safety and how to build on the collaborations above moving forward. They also said that they have been able to consult with UN staff about safety issues affecting the students they tutor and mentor.

3. Building Momentum: Integrating Community Needs & Learning's from Various Projects

Through research carried out by United Neighbours, and as a direct result of residents expressing concerns about crime and violence in the PQCHC catchment area, we have also learned about other key areas of concern that require further exploration because of our deep understanding of crime at the neighbourhood level.

For example the need to explore gender violence came from 2 surveys carried out by the United Neighbours project (2008 and 2011, totaling 1000 surveys from youth and adults on crime and safety issues) as well as the anecdotal information and stories highlighting the need to address women and girl's safety.

As a result of UN research, community dialogue and dedication to the issues, in 2013, we conducted an initiative called "Women & Girl's Eyes on the Neighbourhood: Feeling Safe in Public Space" in partnership with the City for All Women Initiative (CAWI). Together we learned that there is a niche for deepening our work on gendered violence and stereotypes at the neighbourhood level with women and girls, and equally as important, with young men as part of the solution. We also heard that women and girls felt more vulnerable to violence, or feel less safe in the neighbourhoods, than men and boys. The reasons given were: women perceive themselves to be the weaker sex, men dominate/are bullies, gangs find it easier to "take a woman down," girls don't stick together enough, men harass as women walk, parent's fear for their teens safety when going out at night. .

The study and final report confirmed that more work needs to be done, especially with youth around street harassment, violence, bullying and the gendered nature of crime. While we are, as a city, beginning to have these discussions more so, there is a gap still about how youth experience safety at a neighbourhood level.

In 2013, crime and safety continued to be a major concern in the PQCHC neighbourhoods with drug dealing and violence negatively impacting the community (i.e. a stabbing in Michele Heights, a murder in Britannia Woods and beatings which are purportedly all related to drug crimes). As well, increasing incidents of female to female youth bullying has been reported in the community. These incidents resulted in many women and girls in the neighbourhood feeling unsafe in public space and highlighted that we need to explore more deeply how we could best prevent gendered violence. Collectively, the feminist community has come a long way in educating Ottawa residents about gender-based violence, sexual

harassment, street harassment, and bullying. However, even in the year 2014, when a female is street harassed, they will often be asked victim blaming questions such as “What were you wearing?” “Were you flirting?” “Do you think you might have brought that on yourself?” On social media such as Facebook and Twitter, when teen girls and boys are harassed or bullied online, there is a common attitude to somehow blame the victim for being where they shouldn’t be, or “provoking” online harassment. This blaming and shaming often occurs if the harassment is reported, and we know that 90% of people who are street harassed do not report (Hollaback, 2013). We also know that there is great power in bystander intervention, but people need to be made aware of what that looks like and the risks and benefits of it in the community at large. We will continue our work around street-harassment and gender-based violence over the next few years and continue to solidify funding in this important area.

4. United Neighbours in the News: Good News Stories, Successes and Awards

This section highlights successes of United Neighbours and features news stories and media. The PQCHC catchment area has been the focus of a great amount of media attention with regards to crime and safety issues. Some of these stories have been “good news” articles mainly in our local community papers, but sometimes when the area has been highlighted in the larger daily print papers it is portrayed as an area with a higher the average crime rate and a brewing gang problem. Articles highlighting criminal activities in the west-end have appeared in larger mainstream dailies. A study published by the Ottawa Youth Gang Prevention Initiative entitled “Community Cohesion and Youth Gang Prevention in Six Priority Areas” (2009) states that Ottawa’s West-end has significant problems and concerns with respect to youth gang activity. Furthermore, if the potential for the rise in gang activity in the west-end is not approached with preventative programming and community-based activities such as youth murals & employment solutions, widespread education, support and community cohesion, both graffiti and crime rates could continue to rise.

Conversely, residents feel the need to shine light on the many positive initiatives and projects happening within their communities and, for this reason, we have often worked as a collective to craft press releases for the local media outlets in order to have somewhat more input and influence as to how the neighbourhoods are being portrayed in the media. Residents and partners who contribute to the steering committee and smaller working groups have always underscored *the importance* of collectively written press releases & working with local media to highlight successes, awards, and “good news” stories. This is an approach that has worked well for United Neighbours.

The United Neighbours project has been highlighted and featured on various media outlets over the past several years; we attach the links for your interest and reference in Appendix 5.

Additionally, one of our longstanding United Neighbours members & community residents Roberta Della-Picca was awarded the Order of Ottawa (November 2013) for her volunteer and leadership efforts with United Neighbours and other community-led projects in Ottawa. The United Neighbours project won the 2012 United Way’s “Community Builder Award” which was presented to members as a surprise at our United Neighbours Planning Retreat in April. This really made community members proud and it also reinforced our great work to area residents and other partners. It was a very



Figure 12: United Neighbours was awarded the 2012 United Way “community Builder Award” for their efforts in creating a safe community

proud day for working group members and people felt honored to be recognized for their hard work. The United Neighbours name was put on a recognition plaque at Ottawa City Hall in recognition of their community efforts to reduce crime and increase beautification, awareness on mental health issues and resident safety. Additionally, a community resident (Maurice Charlebois) who co-chairs our United Neighbours Steering Committee won the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Award in October of 2012 for his years of dedication to the community.

5. Meaningful Impact: The Voices of United Neighbours

In designing and writing this Community Manual, we asked those who are active United Neighbours to reflect on how their own efforts have helped to decrease crime and increase safety in their community or their work. What follows are some of the narratives from United Neighbours including residents, Community House Coordinators, community partners and youth.

United Neighbours (residents, partners, staff) report having learned so much from each other and feel better equipped and more informed about the neighbourhoods they work and live in. Networking and information-sharing have an important impact in terms of developing stronger community relations among neighbours and social service providers. The engagement of the community has been very positive and the project itself has tested and highlighted new ways of working together towards a common goal and new ways of understanding the contributing factors to crime and safety at the neighbourhood level. Residents report a deeper understanding of the strengths and struggles that their neighbourhoods face and because of this are better able to identify those at risk, better support them and keep themselves safe all at the same time. This is indicative of what others partners said, such as Mike Justinich from Crime Prevention Ottawa:

"I think in my role I did help in connecting staff and residents to people and services they may not have been aware of as well as connecting to residents doing similar things in other parts of Ottawa."

This points to the desire and need of our community partners sitting around the same table, sharing best practices, learning from one another on how to build a safer community. Christine Verlup, a Community House Coordinator at Britannia Woods shared with us through the survey how United Neighbours has helped in her own work. She tells us:

“With help of United Neighbours we held a Community Safety carnival which was a huge success. This was held in partnership and with the support of OCH and Mark Taylor’s Office. This provided a forum for residents to talk about community safety without coming to a “public meeting” and also built community cohesion and pride as neighbors came together for an afternoon BBQ, safety demonstrations and interactions with emergency services that was not a result of a violent action (OCH, Ottawa Police, Fire Dept, Ambulance). Children especially enjoyed this event and carnival games were provided by Circus Delights. 24 youth from our community helped to organize this event volunteering a total of 96 hours.”

QUICKTIP

A great way to keep a portable evaluation log is to have a “Community Journal” that you can bring to resident meetings and events. People can write their ideas, thoughts and feedback in the journal in their native language. Kids can draw a picture. Display this community journal at various events or steering meetings.

United Neighbours Planning Retreat

In 2012 we held a day retreat for United Neighbours steering committee, working group members and other residents invested in the vision of the project. This was an important forum for us to host at a critical juncture in our project planning and reflection. The day retreat was attended by many partners, service providers, law enforcement/security officers, residents, project staff and outreach workers. We had a professional facilitator (who was also responsible for much of the in-depth evaluation of our project this past year) lead the day. We looked at all the work United Neighbours has done over the past few years, where we have come from, what we have learned and where we want the time and resources focused in terms of our 4 working groups. The larger group at the forum was divided into four focus groups, respective of our working groups. This meant that we had great representation from all sectors feeding into, planning and reflecting on the key vision and activities of each working group. That retreat has helped to guide our work this year in a vital way.

Collective Community Journaling

We also began to keep 2 “Community Journals.” Project staff brings these journals to Coffee Houses and other United Neighbours meetings and events and residents have provided feedback through this innovative medium, including adding newspaper clippings to the journal when they, or their neighbourhood, or initiative is featured in the news. This has proven to be a great participatory method for

keeping a record of the impacts of the work we do, collectively. This was a creative way to carry out evaluation, and a much more viable way for people to communicate feedback, especially for those whose first language is not English.

Evaluation

The more momentum that United Neighbours was fueled by, the better we became at evaluating our efforts. A significant amount of our efforts were not only devoted to evaluation more broadly, but the sustainability of the initiatives we implemented as a collective. We had the privilege of having an external evaluator work with us to evaluate the past, present and help plan a sustainable future for United Neighbours. Through Crime Prevention Ottawa, an evaluation consultant (Ken Hoffman) helped the UN steering committee and working groups to generate a “Theory of Change” as well as a major evaluation report entitled “Learning from Community-Based Crime Prevention Initiatives: The Experiences of Three Ottawa Communities” compiled by Ken Hoffman and Melanie Bania. This report (April 2012) highlights various crime prevention initiatives in three neighbourhoods, one of which is our United Neighbours project in the PQCHC catchment area. For further information and details about the indicators we utilized in our own “Theory of Change” you can visit: www.crimepreventionottawa.ca and look under the publications tabs where you can find this full report under the neighbourhoods heading.

Evaluations were carried out periodically through the working groups, United Neighbours Steering Committee (UNSC) and Coffee Houses (Appendix 3). Participants at events and workshops completed evaluations about what worked well, what could be enhanced or changed for the better and what they learned at the event.

6. Reflections & Recommendations

This final section brings forth recommendations & reflections from various United Neighbours including community partners and residents. Narratives from our partners range from what recommendations they would offer to others who might want to start this type of initiative, to what they feel works well (best practices) and not so well (lessons learned).

Sergeant Barb O'Reilly with the Ottawa Police Service who has contributed to United Neighbours for approximately 5 years said that these type of community-driven projects focused on long-term change might seem like a daunting insurmountable task, but every mountain was climbed one step at a time as her quote illustrates here:

"All good ideas and initiatives have to start somewhere. Why not with you? There will be critics and 'nay-sayers.' Listen to them, consider what they have to contribute, but don't be put off by them."

Mike Justinich from Crime Prevention Ottawa, who was supportive throughout the entire duration of the project and worked with us on the UN initiatives and attended steering and working group meetings, suggested that we need to meet communities where they were currently at. He suggested to take time to meet with residents and get to know the realities in their community. To find out formal and informal leadership structures and work with them at a pace that makes sense for them at that time. He added that, Communities would be at different stages of readiness and we need to work with them, where they were. This needs to be seen as a long journey together not a short "project". Mike also suggested:

"Listen everyone, listen some more, be prepared, and open to negativity and criticism, especially in the initial stages. People could be angry and frustrated. They have a right to feel that way and a right to be heard. That was much easier and more productive to the process to have them "inside the tent". Look for opportunities to learn from others and to share what you've learned. Use resident volunteers to talk to other residents. That impact will always be greater. Find some quick wins and celebrate them! Thank and recognize your resident volunteers often."

Several House Coordinators in our PQCHC catchment area said that the United Neighbours project has become a natural part of community life and that the initiative is beneficial for the community and its residents. For example, Denise Reid, House Coordinator at Winthrop Court stated:

"United Neighbours was great support with respect to Winthrop Court's effort to raise awareness for and develop momentum around their efforts toward achieving a park as it had provided community members with an opportunity to develop confidence to speak about their community and what it was striving toward. Two members in particular embraced every opportunity to raise awareness about the park, and the progress of the park, in addition to other events happening at their community."

Pathways to Education staff suggested that, the events of the last year had taught them that there was a great deal of work to do.

"To help youth feel safe in their communities, to understand the seriousness of such occurrences and the importance of reporting crime, and in general, to help families connect to services in the community. Youth had learned NOT to speak

up when they saw something wrong in their communities. They came to understand through discussion with United Neighbours who organize Coffee Houses and presentations by Crimestoppers and students that community members had a strong resistance to reporting crime due to fear of retaliation. Students listened to the presenter, but asked questions mainly through their staff support worker, not directly to the officers. This made it apparent that youth need more relationship building between such services."

Another Pathways to Education staff member said:

"The OCTranspo Special Constable Ken Racine spoke at tutoring, and came at it from a very engaging angle – he used storytelling, music and prizes to help break down barriers, and engage the students differently right from the beginning. He made it clear that he understood where the kids are coming from and that it takes time for them to trust authority figures, and that respect needs to be earned not assumed."

Involving youth to increase our understanding and planning our responses from their perspective is so important. Encouraging, empowering, and equipping youth to work with partner organizations to create solutions that they can help implement in their community is at the heart of our work. One community resident and UN co-chair Bill Robinson, said that one of the Youth Working Groups most important contributions to date has been to focus on youth employment initiatives and youth job and volunteer fairs:

"The tremendous response to the job fair established the need for a focus on youth employment, which led to the establishment of a youth resume help and drop-in (at PQ Employment Services) and helped the organization to better focus on youth employment, and will make the result of our efforts more sustainable. It's important to be flexible, patient, test ideas and push good ideas to sustainability."

All those involved in United Neighbours are mindful that more work needs to be done, especially with youth around drug use and violence, street harassment, bullying and the gendered nature of crime and safety. Noting that everyone has a right to feel safe in their community, we must work together to identify and understand what makes people feel unsafe and more importantly, what prevents them from reporting incidences when they are victims of crime at the neighbourhood level. While we are, as a city, beginning to have these discussions more so and more often, there is a gap still about how youth specifically, experience safety at a neighbourhood level.

We have learned a lot about broad ethno-cultural engagement, building on and strengthening partnerships, volunteering and sustainability. The project's momentum has grown exponentially over several years and we are proud of the amount of projects, programmes and initiatives the United Neighbours have been able to accomplish in a short time period. While we wouldn't do anything "differently" if we were to do it all again, we do have some reflection field notes and additional suggestions for other organizations or community groups looking to embark on a similar type of community development enterprise:

Clear, Realistic Goals: Many projects have a vision statement focused on short or long-term goals. In our experience, partners, residents and other volunteers working on the UN project tend to thrive on clear goals with realistic paths as to how these can be achieved and what individuals can do to achieve these. The work of good community development projects like the United Neighbours is to hear out the stakeholders/ the community, extract their needs/ wants from what they are saying, create a plan and turn their ideas or goals into reality. In reality, vision statements and clear goals in a project can be very impactful, and they lend themselves to collaboration among all stakeholders invested in the project.

Stay focused, but very flexible!: Even during lessons learned brainstorming sessions or working group meetings that have a clear goal, participants can veer off topic. While remaining flexible, try to focus on the issues.

Make it Personal: Try to carve out opportunities for all members/ stakeholders/ participants to find similarity wherever possible. This could take place as an "icebreaker" at the beginning of meetings, or encouraged during coffee breaks etc. This was very effective at our UN Day Retreat where a police officer is partnered up with a resident in a high-crime area and the officer opens up about their own past or their own stereotypes and allows a space for those to be debunked. This could be a discussion with a school principal or a housing security officer where 2 folks find the similarity between them in the university where they studied, the town where they grew up, vacations they've taken, books they've read, or your favorite team and sport. Make sure to find the appropriate moments to share and cultivate these commonalities. Finding similarities and making things more personal can really build trust and strengthen people's comfort around the table and it takes very little time or effort to do this.

Spread the Word: Create a conversation about value of your project with other managers and teams within your health centre or agency. We have done this through talking at staff meetings about our projects and programmes, trying our recruit efforts at cross-team meetings, or making general announcements in all staff newsletters and emails. This is of great value to our own project, but also enriches

the lives of clients our colleagues are working with and creates a cross-fertilization of efforts and creates in essence, a more holistic approach to enhancing quality of life for those we work with.

Process Meetings are Essential: Our steering and working group meetings are as much about reaching consensus as sharing information and “just” having a captive audience to voice concerns or ideas to. Not every meeting is going to adapt to an “agenda” or meet specific goals or a consensus on a heated issue, but each one of these meetings are important to the overall success of team, trust and capacity building among residents and partners.

Talk Sustainability: The main facilitator of any project, especially the United Neighbours, must ensure that the project's outputs will be sustained by ensuring that people and processes are in place to maintain it once the project completes its handover to the community itself. Carve out time to talk sustainability when it comes to planning, implementing and evaluating any program. This is the key to the sustainability of the project in the long-term.

Appendices

Appendix 1: United Neighbours Outreach Materials in 4 languages: English, French, Somali & Arabic

UNITED NEIGHBOURS

Neighbours working together with a common vision and goal for their community

HOW CAN I HELP?


You can become a United Neighbour by volunteering at community events, organizing coffee houses, or by joining one of the four working groups:

- ♦ Environment and Beautification
- ♦ Community Safety
- ♦ Communication and Outreach
- ♦ Mental Health and Substance Abuse

For more information, or to find out how to become involved with United Neighbours, please contact:

Robynn Collins
Program Coordinator

613.820.4922 ext. 522
r.collins@pqchc.com



Centre de santé communautaire
Pinecrest-Queensway
Community Health Centre

WHO WE ARE

United Neighbours is a community driven action project that was launched in 2007 in response to increased community concern over safety and crime. The project aims to reduce criminal activity and increase community safety in Ottawa's west end.


United Neighbours works with west-end residents to promote safe and healthy communities by uniting neighbours and fostering community development. Our common goal is to educate and engage the community on preventing crime and addressing neighbourhood safety.



United Neighbours is supported by the Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre and is funded through Crime Prevention Ottawa and the Trillium Foundation.

WHAT WE DO

- ♦ Conduct surveys in Arabic, Somali, French and English about what community members like and dislike about their community.
- ♦ Plan and implement community forums and coffee houses where community members can come together to discuss issues of concern and find solutions together.
- ♦ Outreach activities such as door-to-door campaigns, public speaking engagements and website development.

Winner of the 2009 Crime Prevention Ottawa Community Safety Award



This poster is available in English, French, Somali and Arabic / Cette affiche est disponible en anglais, français, le Somalien et l'arabe

UNITED NEIGHBOURS

Des voisins travaillant ensemble dans une vision et un objectif commun pour leur communauté

COMMENT VOUS IMPLIQUER?

Vous pouvez vous impliquer dans le projet « United Neighbours » en faisant du bénévolat lors d'événements communautaires; en organisant des café- partage, ou en vous joignant à l'un des quatre groupes de travail ci-dessous

- ♦ Environnement & Embellissement
- ♦ Sécurité communautaire
- ♦ Communication & sensibilisation
- ♦ Santé mentale et toxicomanie

Pour plus d'informations, contactez :

Robynn Collins
Coordinatrice de Programme

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poste: 522
Courriel: r.collins@pqchc.com



CE QUE NOUS SOMMES

« United Neighbours » est un projet d'action communautaire lancé en 2007, en réponse à la préoccupation de la communauté sur l'accroissement de la criminalité. L'objectif du projet étant de diminuer les activités criminelles et accroître la sécurité dans la région ouest d'Ottawa.

Le projet travaille avec les résidents de la région afin de promouvoir une communauté saine et sécuritaire, ainsi que favoriser son développement.

Le projet « United Neighbours » est parrainé par le Centre de Santé Communautaire Pinecrest-Queensway et financé par Prévention du Crime Ottawa et la Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario.

CE QUE NOUS FAISONS

- ♦ Mener des enquêtes en arabe, somali, français et anglais au sujet de ce que la communauté aime ou non dans son milieu de vie;
- ♦ Planifier et mettre en œuvre des forums communautaires et des café- partages durant lesquels les membres de la communauté se rencontrent pour discuter des problèmes d'intérêt général et d'y trouver des solutions ensemble;
- ♦ Mener des activités de sensibilisation, comme des campagnes porte-à porte, des ateliers sur la parole en public, et le développement des sites Internet.

*Gagnant du prix de la Sécurité Communautaire
2009 offert par : Prévention du Crime Ottawa*



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UNITED NEIGHBOURS XAAFADAH MIDOOBAY

Jiiraanka oo wada jir u shaqeeya iyaga oo
himiladoodu tahay horumarka beeshooda

SIDEE KU CAAWIN KARAA?

Waxaad uga mid noqon kartaa United Neighbour (Xaafadaha Midoobey) adigoo waqtigaaga ugu tabruco ka kaalmeynta howlaha beesha.

- ♦ Biiada iyo qurxinta
- ♦ Nabadgalyada beesha
- ♦ La xidhiidhka iyo ku xidhnaata beesha
- ♦ Ka hortagida maan-dooriyeyaalka sida daroogada iyo qamriga

Wixii macluumaad dheeraad-ah fadlan kala xiriir:

Robynn Collins
Project Coordinator

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Centre de santé communautaire
Pinecrest-Queensway
Community Health Centre

AYAANU NAHAY?

Xaafadaha midoobey waa bamaamij beeshu waddo oo la curiyey 2007, oo wax lagaga qabto dareenka weynaaday ee beeshu ka qabto nabadgalyada iyo dambiga. Barnaamijku wuxuu hiigsanayaa in uu fal dambiyeedka hoos u dhigo, nabadgalyada beesha Dhammaadka Galbeedka Ottawa-na kor u qaado.

Xaafadaha midoobey waxay la shaqeeyaan dadka degan Dhammaadka Galbeedka si ay u dhiirigeliyaan nabadgalyo iyo beelo caafimaad qaba oy ku kobciyaan horumarka beesha. Himilada-yadu waa in aan beesha barno una hawlgalino siday uga hortigi-lahaayeen una waajihi-lahaayeen nabadgalyada xaafada.

Xaafadaha midoobey waxaa caawiya Xarunta Caafimaadka Beesha ee Pinecrest-Queensway waxaana maal-galiya Ka hortaga dambiga Ottawa iyo Ururka Trillium.

MAXAANU QABANAA?

- ♦ Sahano ku saabsan waxyaabaha dadka beesha degani jecelyihiin ama ay nacaan ayaan ku gudbinna Af Carabi, Soomaali, Faransiis, iyo ingiriisi.
- ♦ Waxaan qorshaynaa oon hirgalinaa kulanno, iyo in shaah lawada cabbo halkaasoo xubnaha beeshu ay iskugu yimaadaan oy kaga wada hadlaan arrimaha beeshu wax ka qabto iyo inay wada-jir xalal u helaan.
- ♦ Ololaha beesha lagula xiriiro waxaa ka mid ah albaabada oo la garaaco, dad-weynaha oo lala hadlo iyo in la abuur Website.

*Waxaa ka hortaga dambiyada Ottawa
Waxay ku guuleysteen sanadku markuu ahaa
2009 "Abaal-gudka nabadgalyada bulshada"*



THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION



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UNITED NEIGHBOURS

هل ترغب في أن تكون

كيف أستطيع مساعدة:

يمكنك أن تصبح الجار المتحدة
عن طريق التطوع في أحداث
المجتمع ،
وتنظيم المقاهي، أو عن طريق
الانضمام
الى واحدة من أربع مجموعات
عمل :

- 1) البيئة وتجميل
- 2) سلامة المجتمع
- 3) الاتصال والتواصل
- 4) الصحة العقلية واستخدام
العقاقير

لمزيد من المعلومات
أو لمعرفة كيفية المشاركة مع
الجيران المتحدة ، اتصل

Robynn Collins
Project Coordinator

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Centre de santé communautaire
Pincrest-Queensway
Community Health Centre

بذل United Neighbour مبادرة يقودها في نهاية أوتوا الغرب من قادة المجتمع

ومقدمي الخدمات ، والممتأجرين الخاص ، وأصحاب المنازل وجمعيات المستأجرين وموظفي
إنفاذ القانون وأصحاب الأعمال التجارية المحلية. هل يمكن أن تصبح جارة المتحدة بطرق عديدة.
يمكنك الانضمام إلى المتطوعين في الفعاليات المجتمعية ، ومساعدة مشاريع الخطة ، والخبز ،
وحديقة ، وجعل الملصقات ، وتنظيم ليالي السينما والمقاهي ، وتسهيل فصول الفن:

مجموعات عمل تجتمع مرة في الشهر لمناقشة القضايا والمشاريع والمبادرات الجديدة ، ورؤية
مشتركة لمكافحة الخوف وسوء الفهم حول العنف بين الشباب ، والعنصرية ، والسكان
المهاجرين. وقد خططت كل من مجموعات العمل وتنفيذها وتقييمها لعدد من المشاريع في مجتمع
مثل المجتمع المنتديات والمقاهي ، والأحداث الثقافية ، والحدائق العامة والمجتمع أكثر من ذلك
بكثير. مجموعات العمل

عن المزيد من أعضاء المجتمع وأصحاب الأعمال التجارية المحلية للانضمام
أصحاب الأعمال التجارية المحلية للانضمام. كونها جزءا من مجموعة العمل هو وسيلة رائعة
للحصول على أكثر ارتباطا مع مجتمعك ، يكون وكلاء للتغيير ، ووضع خطط عمل مستدامة
على أساس الأولويات التي تم United Neighbour التحسين مجتمعك ، في السنوات المقبلة.
تحديدها من قبل المجتمع ، وإل عمل على وضع خطط عمل ، والانخراط في المجتمع ليصبح في
الحدود المجاورة المشاركة في أحيائهم ، والأهم من يوحد ، نحو تحقيق هدف مشترك لدينا أكثر
أمانا حي للعيش فيه

الفائز في منع الجريمة أوتوا لعام 2009 جائزة السلامة المجتمع



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Appendix 2: Regina Towers Safety Tip Sheet

Regina Towers Tenant Safety Tips

Working together for a safer community

All tenants are responsible for security. Remember good neighbours look after each other



1. Please request that only your first initial and last name appear on your apartment directory and mailbox.
2. Introduce yourself to your community organizations (i.e. Tenant Circle or Association, Lunch Groups, Crafts Group etc.).
3. Get to know other people who live on your floor, this will help you to identify strangers in your building.
4. Never give out copies of your building key.
5. Do not let strangers follow you through your buildings security door - *If you feel intimidated by someone, use an alternative entrance.*
6. Always look inside the elevator before entering it. If you are suspicious of another passenger, wait for the next elevator.
7. Never buzz someone in until you have identified them.
8. Use a peephole and never open your door until you know who is there - *do not simply rely on a door chain for security.*
9. Never prop open doors.
10. Your windows and sliding doors should have anti-lift and locking devices to prevent them from being lifted out
11. Keep all doors to your unit locked at all times, even when you go to the laundry room – *remember to keep the balcony doors locked when not in use.*
12. If you are going to be away for a while, ask someone you trust to check on your apartment and collect your mail.
13. Be cautious when discussing your personal information (i.e. your schedule, valuables in your home, vacation plans, etc.).
14. Call 911 when you see illegal or suspicious activity, and then report it to OCH security.
15. Consider starting a neighborhood watch in your building.

For more resources such as how to use *crime mapping* in your area please visit:

<http://www.ottawapolice.ca/en/home.aspx> and/or find other resources on crime prevention in your

neighbourhood please go to <http://www.crimepreventionottawa.ca/>

Appendix 3: United Neighbours Coffee Houses Survey

1. How many coffee houses have you attended? _____

2. Do you feel safe and comfortable during the coffee house?

Yes/ No Why? _____

3. Did you learn about new services or practices as a result of attending this coffee house?

Yes/ No. If yes, which ones? _____

4. Were your questions answered? Yes/ No

5. Do you feel safer contacting the Police, OCH security, Crime Stoppers or OC Transpo security as a result of attending the coffee house? Yes/ No Why or why not?

6. What would you like to see at these coffee houses and/ or what are your suggestions for future topics or guests?

Thank you for completing this survey, the United Neighbours



**This project is funded through Crime Prevention Ottawa,
The Trillium Foundation and Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre**

Appendix 4: My Call Makes a Difference Postcards (Front & Back)

My call makes a difference

Reporting crime makes my community safer

This campaign was developed through a partnership between
Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre,
Ottawa Community Housing, and the Ottawa Police Service.



WHAT WE HEAR PEOPLE SAY

"No one else calls, so why should I?"

"Nothing happened"

"Nothing will change"

"No one came"

"Nothing was done"

"They arrived 2 hours later"

"They already know"

"People will know it was me that called"

EVERY CALL HELPS BUILD A SOLUTION

Every call:

- ◆ Shows that there is a problem
- ◆ Is counted
- ◆ Is a critical step in helping to change a problem
- ◆ Is a critical step in building a case to make change
- ◆ Helps convince others that there is a problem
- ◆ Reminds others that there is a problem

REMEMBER

You can ask that police/ security do not come to your door when you call.
You can ask that they call you if they need more information.

Appendix 5: United Neighbours in the Media

Ottawa Citizen

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Crime+prone+neighbourhoods+transform+themselves+with+community+initiatives/7268760/story.html>

Ottawa Sun

<http://m.ottawasun.com/2012/09/19/community-initiatives-help-reduce-crime-report?noimage=true>

CFRA

Afternoon Edition - City Beat

http://www.cfra.com/chum_audio/CITY%20BEAT%20SEPT%2020.mp3

CBC Radio panel with residents

http://podcast.cbc.ca/mp3/podcasts/ottallinaday_20120920_85565.mp3

CBC-TV News

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2012/09/20/ott-crime-down-prevention-downtown.html>

Metronews

<http://metronews.ca/news/ottawa/377361/ottawas-most-notorious-neighborhoods-see-biggest-drops-in-crime/>

Radio-Canada Bernard et Companie (radio).

<http://www.radio-canada.ca/regions/ottawa/2012/09/20/004-prevention-crime-bilan-ottawa.shtml>

CTV Ottawa's 6 pm news

about 9:00 minutes into the newscast
at <http://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/video?playlistId=1.965169>.

24hours newspaper

<http://eedition.ottawa.24hrs.ca/epaper/viewer.aspx>

EMC Kanata

<http://www.emckanata.ca/20120920/news/Communities+creating+a+safer+city>

Ottawa Sun

<http://www.ottawasun.com/2012/09/19/community-initiatives-help-reduce-crime-report>

The United Neighbours coordinator guest-blogged for Crime Prevention Ottawa's executive director's blog in February on the topic of why residents have challenges reporting crime (<http://crimepreventionottawa.wordpress.com/>).

Additionally, the coordinator wrote an article about United Neighbours that was featured in the National Justice Network's monthly national newsletter (http://crcvc.ca/enewsletter/jun-12/story07.html?utm_source=June+2012&utm_campaign=NJN+May+2012&utm_medium=email).

Appendix 6: Group Agreements for United Neighbours Meetings

- Respect is about presenting ideas non-aggressively in order to move forward
- People have differing viewpoints- we don't have to agree, but we can try to understand
- No putting people down
- The issue is not the person
- Decisions should benefit the larger community as a whole, not individual interest's
- No interrupting one another
- We can all learn something from each other
- Keep personal issues outside of the meetings
- Everyone should be given opportunity to speak- chair and co-chair will monitor this
- Round-table at beginning *or* end of meetings to check-in
- We will maximize and share our collective resources
- Listening is a sign of respect
- We want everyone to feel comfortable and safe in our meetings and we will each work to ensure that this happens