



CALGARY'S COMMUNITIES COME TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE NEIGHBOURS

Over 25 Community associations in Calgary spend the day celebrating Neighbour Day

*Written by: Megan Beierle, Communications Assistant
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The Federation of Calgary Communities attended over 25 events on Saturday, June 17 in recognition of Calgary's fourth annual Neighbour Day. With invitations from community associations between Arbour Lake and Willow Ridge, and all across the city, seven members of the organization's Engagement Team participated in pancake breakfasts, bike parades, family festivals, and much more.

Calgary witnessed a remarkable uptake of the first Neighbour Day in 2014, as nearly 20 communities joined together to celebrate neighbourhood spirit. Following Calgary's 2013 flood, Mayor Naheed Nenshi proclaimed the third Saturday in June as Neighbour Day to recognize the strength of communities in good times and bad. The flood may have destroyed homes and uprooted families in Calgary and the surrounding areas, but it also made Calgary's residents realize how much trust they could put in their neighbours to help them through life-changing events.

Although the flood has passed and left Calgarians with memories of their city under water, the strength of this city is more than a memory; it lives on today. This year, the Federation witnessed an even closer group of people coming together to show their appreciation for one another on Neighbour Day. Calgary's residents have moved on to showcase strength and resilience year after year.

This year, the Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Association (HSCA) hosted its Sunnyside Games and Talent Show! This time four years ago, HSCA was under a mandatory evacuation order. Neighbour Day is about more than remembering the flood; it is also about coming together with neighbours to celebrate the strength and resilience of our communities and our city.



Sunnyside Games and Talent Show



Huntington Hills Neighbour Day

The Federation's focus when attending Neighbour Day events this year was to promote the new ActivateYYC microgrant program, and encourage residents of community associations to walk, play and be neighbourly. Neighbour Day is a strong example of residents getting together and activating nearby spaces. While each community contributed to Neighbour Day in unique ways, they all showed their residents how to effectively activate greenspaces in a variety of ways. As we approached different people and talked to

them about getting their neighbours involved in community activities, we heard many exciting ideas about how they envisioned local spaces becoming activated.

Karen Williams from the Huntington Hills Community Association told the Federation that when Huntington Hills was just becoming established everybody knew each other and came together for events like Neighbour Day more often. She remarked that “as people age, they don’t interact with their neighbours as much as they should, or as much as they would like to,” adding that getting together with neighbours adds life to the community. Karen said that Huntington Hills is trying to get younger families and residents involved in the community association - and has been successful so far - so that the community can continue to grow, and neighbours can continue to get together on occasions like Neighbour Day. This interaction was proof that while community associations may age, the potential to remain active with their residents is unending.

At the Beddington Heights Community Association Neighbour Day event, we talked to residents Brenda Hill and Klaus Urban, who remarked that their community is full of dog owners. They shared their vision of hosting a dog show and pet fair in their green space and inviting all of their neighbours to join them. They also said that many of their neighbours had expressed a high level of interest in a similar project. When hearing that they were eligible to apply for an ActivateYYC microgrant of up to \$750, they told us that they would go home and apply for one! Looking around the wide greenspace in Beddington, neighbours interacted with one another and children played with family dogs. At this moment, it was clear that events like Neighbour Day could be commonplace in each community at any time of the year, to celebrate popular community interests.



Beddington Heights Neighbour Day



In the northwest quadrant of the city, the Ranchlands Community Association activated its community centre with a chilli cook-off to celebrate their neighbourliness. With over five different chillies to sample and rank, the residents of Ranchlands had a tough job. Our attending staff remarked at how delicious all of the samples were, and also commented on the level of interaction and enjoyment evident at the event. Children were playing in the gymnasium, old friends were enjoying chilli samples together at the picnic tables, and the overall mood was jovial. The spirit of Neighbour Day was present at Ranchlands Community Association’s Neighbour Day event, and with their level of creativity, we anticipate imaginative ActivateYYC microgrant applications from residents in the near future!

Ranchlands Neighbour Day

Neighbour Day revealed that there are so many unique ways to get involved in community and engage neighbours. From pancake breakfasts and chilli cook-offs to talent shows with entertainment for all ages, community associations across Calgary already use Neighbour Day as an opportunity to walk, play and be neighbourly in their local spaces. The Federation’s experiences on June 17 revealed that community spirit within Calgary is strong, and can only be strengthened more by hosting Neighbour-Day-like events on a more regular basis, with a little help from ActivateYYC microgrants.