



COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

making a difference in your community

Surrey: Creating Community Spirit and Pride

Surrey is a mix of vast areas of low-density residential development with small pockets of rapidly evolving high-density developments. This makes it difficult to foster and maintain a feeling of city spirit or pride.

“Compared with a number of other major Canadian cities, Surrey does not have a widespread system of strong communities, where people take pride in their communities and neighbourhoods and work together for the betterment of these areas,” says Rosemary Zelinka, a planner and Surrey resident.

In 2002, the Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities (Surrey ASC) was created to act as an umbrella organization for community associations and groups dedicated to improving the livability and sustainability of communities in Surrey.

Some of Surrey’s Community Associations like Tynehead, Port Kells and Fleetwood have been contributing to their community for years while others, like Bolivar Heights and South Westminster are relatively new. Surrey ASC provides a venue for associations to learn from each other. All community associations in Surrey are invited and currently, twenty of the thirty community associations actively participate in Surrey ASC.

Members meet monthly to share information, identify common issues and when possible, hear from guest speakers. Guests have included Lance Talbott, Surrey’s Crime Reduction Manager; Renate Gepraegs, Surrey’s Beautification Coordinator; Jean Lamontagne, General Manager of Planning; and Al Vigoda from Vibrant Surrey.

With support for the United Way, Surrey ASC has worked to promote community development and capacity building in Surrey. Their goal is to foster “neighbourliness” through people working together to improve their quality of life.

“The essence of a strong community is that people think not just of themselves, but of their neighbours also,” says Zelinka, who also volunteers as coordinator for Surrey ASC.

2008 will be a pivotal year for Surrey ASC. On May 10, it is sponsoring a workshop open to all community members.

Jim Diers, author of “Neighbor Power” and past Director of Neighbourhoods in Seattle, will be the keynote speaker. City staff and others will be on hand to explain and provide information on resources available in the community. Surrey ASC members will be available to provide advice to groups just starting out and share

information about successful projects and initiatives they have undertaken.

Neighbours working together can identify needs in their area and participate at the community level to make Surrey the new place to be, one neighbourhood at a time.

For further information on the Building Strong Communities workshop on May 10 at Fleetwood Community

Centre, visit www.surreyasc.com. The workshop is free but pre-registration is required: workshop@surreyasc.com (please provide your name, phone number and address).



Various communities in Surrey are involved in activities and programs that benefit their area. Limited space allows us to highlight several in the following pages. For a complete list of community associations in Surrey, please visit www.surreyasc.com.

Bolivar Heights: Connecting Community

On September 7th, 2007, 14 residents of Bolivar Heights founded the Bolivar Heights Community Association, dedicated to creating a safe, clean, cooperative environment for the 5,000 plus residents. The Association is committed to becoming a model community that works effectively with the rest of Surrey.

Working closely with Colleen Staresina, RCMP Crime Prevention Coordinator, the BHCA initiated a Block Watch

program. Community members were trained to observe and report suspicious activity. Residents gathered information which led to the capture of a break-and-enter thief operating in the neighbourhood. Bolivar Heights recently received an award from the RCMP for being a model Block Watch community.

Another program is Neighbourhood Cleanup. Residents get together most Saturday mornings to clean up a few streets. “It’s a good way to stay in touch with your neighbours and teach children the value of participation,” commented one local parent.

Much of the activity in Bolivar Heights is communicated on the community’s highly interactive web site – bolivarheights.ca where members discuss topics of common interest.

Future plans of BHCA include enhancing a sense of community with activities such as a neighbourhood garage sale and a plant swap. During the summer of 2008, the associa-

tion will focus on the environment, planting sustainable gardens in public areas around the community.

In a recent address in the Legislature, Bruce Ralston, MLA for Surrey-Whalley said “Bolivar Heights has experienced a renaissance of involvement and a growing sense of security.” As well, Penny Priddy, MP for Surrey North spoke in Parliament of the community spirit of the Bolivar Heights community.

On June 21st, BHCA will hold the second annual Bolivar Day. Plans include entertainment, refreshments, face painting, crafts, games and information on BHCA. There will be door prizes and the opportunity to meet local politicians including Penny Priddy, MP and Bruce Ralston, MLA.

For more information on the Bolivar Heights Community Association, visit their website at www.bolivarheights.ca



Cloverdale: Thirty Years of Cultivating Community

The Cloverdale Community Association was active in the Cloverdale for several years before being officially registered under the Societies Act on October 4, 1978. The aim of the Association to provide a collective voice for all of Cloverdale and to deal with issues affecting the well being and development of the community and to promote community togetherness. Cloverdale.

One focus has been sports programs and facilities that

encourage students to remain physically active and busy. Funds have been donated to boys and girls sports teams and for the construction of a sports box for year-round use. Funds have also been contributed to a sustaining scholarship at Lord Tweedsmuir High School. The Association makes requests to the City Planning and Engineering departments regarding development issues, traffic patterns, sidewalk installation, etc.

Fleetwood: "Lance Corporal Arthur Thomas Fleetwood" LIFE-SIZE SCULPTURE

In 2008 the Fleetwood Community Association will realize a 10 year vision. This community group has commissioned a life size sculpture of "Lance Corporal Arthur Thomas Fleetwood" to whom the Fleetwood community owes its name to.

According to a BC report, Building Our Culture Together, over 20 per cent of Canada's built heritage has been lost in the past two decades alone. This bronze sculpture will be the cornerstone of a historic event in the Fleetwood community; inspiring pride and honoring a man who contributed to Canada's freedom.

This piece of public art will be installed in Fleetwood Community Centre Plaza at the corner of 84th Avenue and 160th Street. Besides being a link to Surrey's heritage it will be an anchor for future planning and a cultural touch-stone for generations to come.

The plaza will be further enhanced with benches,

new stair railing, decorative paving, new community centre signage and historic markers. Landscaping will be rejuvenated with flowers and interpretive panels. This project will complement the City Beautification initiative and certainly be a wonderful project to "Honour the Past and Celebrate the Future of BC's first 150 years" in 2008.

The celebration and unveiling of the sculpture and plaza redevelopment will take place at the Fleetwood Festival 10th Anniversary on Saturday, September 6, 2008. This is also when the Fleetwood Community Association celebrates its 85th Anniversary and heritage with the community.



Fraser Heights: Committed to Calm

Fraser Heights Community Association was formerly known as the FH Ratepayers Association that was established in the mid 1980's. Early residents had major concerns about plans for townhouse and commercial shopping development in the area in what was promised to be a single-home community.

FHCA has been in operation since the mid-1990's and continues to address the major concerns this unique bedroom community has faced since residential homes were first built north of Highway #1. The serene atmosphere changed forever when CN Railway decided to build their intermodal operation directly north of the community. The land forms a natural amphitheatre and the noise of the operation has plagued the region since the days of its construction. No other intermodal yard in Canada is built in this manner.

In 2000 residents were shocked at new drawings showing that the proposed South Fraser Perimeter Road would be relocated to the buffer ledge adjacent to the homes. Protests in opposition to this plan were taken into consideration and the alignment was

again changed to the area running parallel to the CN tracks. Residents are still fighting a battle to have Gateway consider proper noise and air quality mitigation for the proposed four-lane truck route in their backyard.

Residents face the constant battle of "rat runners" using their community, especially in rush hour to access the 152nd Street access to the freeway leading west. FHCA has been in consultation to promote traffic calming, signage and more police enforcement to resolve the issues.

FHCA fundraised, with matching dollars from the city, to build a first class design children's water park near Erma Stephenson School. They have also added input to a recently opened Recreation Complex, upgraded tennis courts, Skate Board Park and operation of activities in these areas.

The Association is highly active and considered a model for other community groups in their attempts to maintain quality of community throughout the City of Surrey.



Guildford: Building Community through Partnership

Guildford Community Partners is an example of how a group of residents can identify a need and, with determination, find success.

The Guildford Community Partners do many of the same things as other community groups. They work with the RCMP Community Policing, Crime Prevention Programs, School Liaison Program and Drug Awareness in Schools to encourage greater information sharing about crime prevention and drug awareness in their area.

They also hold an annual craft fair which provides funding for Guildford Seniors' programs and activities as well as support for inner city schools.

But, this small group of dedicated members has also had some astonishing and admirable successes. They saw a need for a recreation centre and raised more than \$268,000 towards the centre. They also contributed \$5,000 toward the Guildford Library Computer lab and close to \$7,000 for the Surrey Canadian Baseball Association's new indoor batting cage.

After such efforts many groups would have patted themselves on the back, put up their feet and watched the world go by. Not Guildford Community Partners. This civic-minded group is now thinking beyond just creating a benefit for its neighbourhood. It is spearheading a project that will benefit to the whole City. Not to be outdone by their past successes they are currently trying to locate an Olympic size pool facility in Guildford.

Ocean Park: Creating a Sustainable Community

The Ocean Park Community Association is one of the oldest Associations in Surrey and proud owner of its Hall. The original Ocean Park society was granted land for the hall in 1924. It incorporated in 1925 and 3 months later hosted its first community function.

As part of the Association's 75th anniversary celebration in 2000 two legacies were created: a Community Quilt and a Community Time Chest (Time Capsule). The time chest, to be opened in 2050, contains letters, photographs, newspapers, drawings created by elementary students and other memorabilia

Also in 2000, the Association was instrumental in saving the Ocean Park Library and lands from sale to Safeway and donated \$7,597.90 toward the purchase of the fireplace in the new library.

Spurred by a review of the Surrey Official Community Plan, the Association initiated the Ocean Park Area

Livability Study (OPALS) in July, 2001. Over 5,000 households were surveyed about aspects of community living, availability of goods and services, and other quality of life issues. The OPALS report was adopted by Surrey City Council on November, 2002.

One direct outcome of OPALS was the formation of the Traffic Calming Task Force, which presented a detailed report on our main traffic issues to Surrey City Council in 2004. Council directed the Engineering Department to work with the residents to address these issues and some work has started towards this end.

Kwomais Point Park was purchased by the City in 2007 and the community is interested in its development process. OPCA has a member on the Parks & Rec. steering committee overseeing this process.

The OPCA continues to follow its original mandate as stated: "To create a community spirit by fostering an

intelligent interest in all

community affairs,....

The community hall shall establish a community centre,...promote a social, educational, and recreational interest in the neighborhood."

For more information, please visit their website at www.oceanparkca.ca



Port Kells: Preserving Quality of Life

Port Kells is a community that pushes for sustainable development with a special emphasis on preserving Surrey's heritage and history.

In 2004, the ribbon was cut on new trail improvements and unveiling of heritage plaques for a number of heritage-designated trees within Port Kells Park. The design of the park allows residents to enjoy the natural beauty of the area without negatively impacting on the

environment. The extent of the park upgrade would not have been possible without a \$13,000 donation from the Port Kells Community Association.

Wally Sandvoss, an active member of the Port Kells community and Surrey 2007 Good Citizen Award winner, has championed the preservation of the Baron von Mackenson "Spy Castle" (one of the oldest remaining buildings in the original Port Kells) and raising funds for the creation of the Port Kells cenotaph to honour Port Kells volunteers in World War I and II. He was also the founder of Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities.

A major concern for the community is the encroachment of industrial lands into the south area of Port Kells and the effect this may have on their quality life.

"We are pushing for sustainable development," says Darlene Bowyer, member of the Port Kells Community Association and strong advocate for heritage preservation in Surrey.

"Sustainable development puts emphasis on livability, the environment and the economy."

"Each one receives the same amount of concentration," Bowyer says. "When you do that, you have sustainable growth, and you have beautiful communities."

Tynehead Community Association: A Century of Experience

In 2007, Tynehead Hall located at 168 Street and 96 Avenue celebrated its 100th anniversary. Since the doors first opened it has been the venue for community dinners, weddings, all-candidates meetings and numerous fundraising activities.

But the community is more than just a hall. The people who are members of the Community Association work hard to make Tynehead a great place to live.

They work with the RCMP Community Policing and Crime Prevention Programs to resolve problems in the area relating to crime.

The Community Association has also provided funding for children and youth recreation, sports and safety programs. A portion of their fundraising efforts support the RCMP Surrey Junior Youth Academy.

Association members support Tynehead's heritage, history, pioneering spirit and historical buildings. They are currently developing a conservation program.

The Community Association provides learning and leadership opportunities that underlie and foster the social fabric of the community. For further information: www.tyneheadhall.ca

Whalley: A Tradition of Celebrating Community

This year marks the tenth year of the Whalley Community Festival. It started with a chance discussion between Lucie Matich, a tireless community volunteer, and Sahra-Lea Tosdevine-Tataryn, community coordinator through Surrey Parks & Rec. They wanted a venue to promote the community pride that was underlying the Whalley area but was being eroded by unfavourable stories in the press.

They invited nonprofit organizations in Whalley to participate, local crafters to sell their wares and children and seniors to perform. Central City Shopping Centre (then Surrey Place Mall), the Leader newspaper and Tech BC were on board as major sponsors with other businesses providing items for the Silent Auction and volunteer thank-you gifts.

By 2007, the Whalley Festival had financial support from over 70 businesses and organizations. More than 50 nonprofit groups and crafters had displays and there were four stages of entertainment, including the main stage with 'Chilliwack' headlining the event.

In 2001, the Whalley Community Festival Committee was

approached to take over the governance of the Whalley Community Association. The small but committed group of volunteers represented people who lived, worked, learned or owned property in Whalley.

Although the festival remained the focus of the association, the group did a community art project in 2004 and a summer-end block party.

More recently, they were involved in the Surrey Transit Village Plan and the new City Centre plan. They assist with the annual RCMP Block Party and were pleased to participate in the grand opening of SFU in 2006.

"The last year has been very busy," says Bonnie Burnside, current president. "We have been planning for the 10th Whalley Community Festival while at the same time trying to get a new Farmers' Market for downtown Surrey off the ground. There is a lot of positive energy being generated."

Join the Whalley Community Festival 10th year celebrations at Mosaic Park in Downtown Surrey (beside Sunrise Pavilion) on Saturday, June 14 from noon- 6 pm. 'Ache Brasil,' 'The Higgins,' 'Tillers Folly' and 'Fab Foursome' are a few of the entertainers scheduled to perform. For further information: www.whalleyfestival.com.



Neighbours Together Can Make a Difference

Surrey has just created a Civic Beautification Program designed to promote community spirit and civic engagement through various streetscape enhancement initiatives. Initiatives include decorative lighting, banners, graffiti mitigation, gateway signage, and planters and other landscaping in key locations to establish a significant visual impression.

While this is a good start, we can see where it might grow by looking at Toronto.

Toronto has a Neighbourhood Beautification Program designed to engage communities to beautify underutilized spaces within the City and complements the City's increased efforts to clean and revitalize overlooked City-owned spaces. The program is facilitated through the Clean and Beautiful Department.

The Toronto program's Community Projects Initiative provides up to \$3,000.00 for community-based improvement projects. Funding is allocated to community projects best suited to the project criteria. Groups are encouraged to source in-kind donations or local partnerships to supplement project funding.

Perhaps Surrey could set up a program similar to Toronto whereby neighbours could identify areas of need within their community and apply for grants through the beautification coordinator. Wouldn't that be a wonderful way to engage the community and clean up neighbourhoods?

Jim Diers, author of 'Neighbor Power' will be the keynote speaker at the Surrey ASC workshop, "Building Strong Communities". Plan to attend to learn ways you can participate in your community. Workshop takes place Saturday, May 10 at Fleetwood Community Centre - pre-registration required:

workshop@surreyasc.com or 604-588-1033. Further information www.surreyasc.com



Examples of projects in various Toronto neighbourhoods.

THANKING OUR VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR ENDLESS CONTRIBUTIONS AND DEDICATION OVER THE YEARS!

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