



## GREAT IDEAS FOR GREAT NEIGHBOURHOODS

Curious to learn what's happening in your neighbourhood and other neighbourhoods in Victoria? Looking for some local and global inspiration for community building and placemaking ideas? Here are some ideas, resources and updates to help you create a vibrant neighbourhood.

### IDEAS FROM AROUND THE CITY

#### Redfern Park New Garden

Redfern Park has had a bit of a makeover. This past year residents added a community garden where people can sit under a pergola, play board games or enjoy a casual lunch. The new garden complements the existing playground features and large grass areas for running the dogs, throwing a frisbee or laying in the sunshine. Check out this park in the Jubilee neighbourhood as inspiration for placemaking in your neighbourhood.



#### My Great Neighbourhood Grants to Open Early in 2024

For the first time since its inception, the *My Great Neighbourhood Grant* program closed early with the funds fully expended. The City supported 44 great placemaking projects and community development activities across the city. Among the funded projects were multiple block parties, a cleanup of Clover Point beach, a harvest celebration and more colourful murals. Each one of these 44 projects will make a difference in creating community in the city neighbourhoods. Now is the time to start thinking about potential ideas as in 2024, the **grant program will open February 1**, a full 2 months earlier than normal. Reach out to me as your neighbourhood liaison to discuss your ideas so I can assist you in shaping a successful application.

### IDEAS FROM FURTHER ABROAD

#### Developing Neighbourhoods in Ottawa



Ottawa has a well-established approach to improving quality of life in neighbourhoods. Through their [Community Development Framework](#), community associations and other service providers work together to determine priority issues in the neighbourhoods and action plans for addressing them. Working Groups develop approaches for improvements on priority topics such as community safety, capacity building and civic engagement and a steering committee ensures that the process is successfully implemented. Details of the process is described in the framework manual.



## Kindness Advent Calendar

With November here, thoughts are turning to the Christmas season and everything that comes with it, including the various kinds of advent calendars that have come upon the scene in the past years. What was once a religious season, advent has now taken on a not-so-religious connotation in many circles with the onslaught of consumerism-focused Advent calendars. From Legos to trinkets to jewelry, the advent tradition has been taken over by “stuff.” Whether you’re religious or not, many people today are beginning to look for advent calendar ideas that take a more meaningful approach to the season and there are lots of great examples to look to, including a Kindness calendar. Raising people who exhibit kindness and empathy is something we have to intentionally model and discuss. As the saying goes, kindness is “taught, not caught.” With that in mind, why not use the advent tradition as a time to focus on kindness and acts of service instead? The internet offers lots of great ideas focused on both children and adults. You can use one of these specific calendars or use them for ideas to create your own. Here are a couple of examples for you, including a reverse advent calendar, which encourages us to give an item each day. The author chose to give to a food bank but you could change up this activity for any cause that is near to your family’s heart.



## Random Acts of Kindness Advent Calendar

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						
		1 Do a chore for someone	2 Give someone a compliment	3 Bake a treat for a neighbor	4 Make a card for a soldier	5 Clean up litter outside
6 Tell jokes to make people laugh	7 Call a relative to say hi	8 Draw a picture for a local senior	9 Donate food to a food bank	10 Tell your parents you love them	11 Donate books to the library	12 Make a present for a friend
13 Write a nice note to your teacher	14 Deliver candy canes to your neighbors	15 Put \$5 in someone's mailbox	16 Help cook dinner for your family	17 Give someone a flower	18 Give the bus driver a thank you card.	19 Donate winter clothes
20 Clean your room without being asked	21 Tell a stranger to have a nice day	22 Donate pet food for a local shelter	23 Set the table and clean up after dinner	24 Leave a gift for the postal carrier in your mailbox		
						





## MAKING IT HAPPEN

### Fall Community of Practice Session – Branding your Organization



The Neighbourhood Team is offering another free workshop for neighbourhood associations and community-based organizations focused on community development. In this interactive session, we will explore what it takes to create and sustain a great brand. We will ask you to share your current brand, and discuss the underlying factors that are necessary to support a brand. At the end of the session, you will have a good understanding of branding and take away some specific ideas for improvements that your association may choose to focus on. Whether it's a "tune up" on your existing brand or you are just starting out, we hope that it

will provide you with valuable information. The workshop will be held **Wednesday, November 29 from 4 - 6:30 p.m.** If you have not received an invitation and would like to attend, please reach out to me and I will add you to the waiting list.

### Social Connection Research Shows Links to Health

What if there is something in our everyday lives that can transform our whole health and well-being? Something that can decrease the risk of developing and worsening heart disease, anxiety, high blood pressure, dementia and diabetes? It exists. It's something that needs to be cared for and nurtured like a garden, by all of us. It can create healthier, more prosperous and resilient communities. That something is called social connection. Social connection is essential to our health and well-being. Connection plays a critical role in individual, community, and societal health. Earlier this year the US Surgeon General published an advisory on our epidemic of loneliness and isolation. This advisory calls attention to that role and offers a framework for how we can all contribute to improving social connection. Today, loneliness is more widespread than other major health issues in North America. Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation is a major public health concern. Whether you are involved in health care, creating social connection or developing community, this research contains significant and important information on why and how to foster social connection. Although the data and research was developed in the United States, it translates completely to our situation in Canada. Read the advisory and access shareable tools on this study on the [US Surgeon General's webpage](#).

