Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Strategy 2013 Annual Report v1

www.hamilton.ca/neighbourhoods
“Hamilton is unique among Canadian cities because our Neighbourhood Action Strategy engages residents beyond just casting a ballot on election day. I’m very proud as Mayor to see the residents provide sensible sustainable ideas within their neighbourhood context that staff can actually implement within a reasonable timeline. The key word is ‘Action’ which makes us different from other engagement strategies.”

- Mayor Bob Bratina, City of Hamilton
Over the last three years, the City of Hamilton has spent considerable time and energy creating a Neighbourhood Action Strategy. This program or better put, this new way of thinking and acting has been transformational for us as an organization, but also for the community and our institutional partners.

Since its initiation in 2010, in partnership with the Hamilton Community Foundation, we have engaged residents within 11 City neighbourhoods. The Neighbourhood Action Strategy has provided the framework for the “horizontal integration” of neighbourhood work that not only ensures the effective and efficient delivery of service at a neighbourhood level, but assists us, the City, in creating a stronger working relationship with residents and key stakeholders within those neighbourhoods.

In September 2012, our first four Neighbourhood Action Plans completed by the residents of the Keith, Stinson, McQuesten and Beasley Neighbourhoods were presented and endorsed by Hamilton City Council. At that meeting I can truly say that I was overwhelmed with what I saw. The energy in the room was inspirational. Residents presented their plans, spoke passionately about their hopes and wishes for their community and their neighbourhoods, and in the end there was unanimous support and a strong desire to keep moving forward by all. Four additional plans for the Riverdale, Davis Creek (formerly Quigley Road) South Sherman and Jamesville Neighbourhoods have also been completed and presented to City Council for endorsement in 2013, shifting the primary focus from the planning phase into implementation across eight of the 11 priority neighbourhoods. It is anticipated that the remaining three plans will be completed by the end of 2014.

These Neighbourhood Action Plans are truly community plans, reflecting the issues that are most relevant and pressing to the residents that live in each neighbourhood, highlighting what the residents themselves hope can be achieved.

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy has played a large role in helping to strengthen relationships with key institutions and encourage new community involvement and investments from both the private and public sectors, as evident in the pages of this first Annual Report. As I look forward to the continued work between residents, community partners and the City of Hamilton, it is important to take stock of the great work and significant results that have already been achieved.

Thank-you to all participants in this very important initiative and I look forward to our continued progress together.

Chris Murray, City Manager
When Hamilton Community Foundation launched its neighbourhood focus back in 2002, our goal was to have a significant impact on quality of life for residents. Little did we imagine that eight years later the City of Hamilton would adopt that focus and expand its scope into the strategy that exists today.

Over the last decade, the Foundation has invested close to $10 million into the communities showcased in this report. Beginning with our “Growing Roots... Strengthening Neighbourhoods” initiative where we piloted the neighbourhood community development worker approach, leading to our multi-year poverty grantmaking focus, through to the new Neighbourhood Leadership Institute, Hamilton Community Foundation has held fast to two principles:

• We believe that every neighbourhood has assets: people with ideas and strengths and skills to offer. Our job is to help them build on those assets.

• We believe that residents know best what their neighbourhoods need. Our job is to listen, to be responsive, and to help their voices be heard.

One of our proudest yet most humbling moments took place last year when we watched citizens present their neighbourhood action plans to City Council. It felt like a culmination of our approach and a celebration of Hamilton's vibrancy. These great teams, backed by hundreds of their neighbours and energized with vision, courage and hope, are the ultimate return on our investment. Their dedication is transforming their communities block by block with great resident leadership, better safety, more citizens engaged, blossoming local pride, and many visible improvements to services, facilities and streetscapes.

Of course there is more to be done and more to learn about how best to do it – building communities is ongoing, never static – but our neighbourhoods have shown that, with committed support from responsive partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors, they are more than up to the challenge.

Terry Cooke
President & CEO
Hamilton Community Foundation
It was only a year ago that I had the privilege of introducing residents from the first four Neighbourhoods (Beasley, Keith, McQuesten & Stinson) that were presenting THEIR Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs) to Hamilton City Council for endorsement. Since then, we have seen a total of 8 NAP’s completed. Contained within these 8 NAP’s are 315 Actions. Implementation of the many actions identified as priorities by each of the neighbourhoods is well underway (137 of the Actions are underway (43%), 9 are complete (3%) and 24 (8%) are completed, but reoccurring) and momentum continues to grow, with partnerships between residents, city staff and other service providers continuing to expand. To date, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy has seen investments from community and institutional partners in the amount of nearly $3M ($360,000 of City funds leveraging $2.6 million in direct investments from external sources).

We are working differently under the Neighbourhood Action Strategy. Our work is driven by community priorities. Our model is strength based and focuses on assets. We are working as “one City” and truly collaborating across departments. The result is a momentum that is undeniable. More and more residents are getting involved in their neighbourhood and are doing the “heavy lifting” required to implement many of the action items. New partnerships are being formed with businesses, organizations and key institutions to access the resources necessary to move the Action Plans forward.

This is the first annual report and highlights some of the accomplishments to date. It is impressive to see what has been achieved but we all know there is still much more work to be done. With our community development approach and the shared commitment to ACTION I know we will continue to make our neighbourhoods healthier places to live, work, play and learn.

Enjoy this year’s annual report and please keep up to date on our work by going to our website at: www.hamilton.ca/neighbourhoods

Paul Johnson,
Director, Neighbourhood Action Strategies
Hamilton has a long history of people and organizations working together to make positive changes in our community. The City’s Neighbourhood Action Strategies Office was established to work with residents and local leaders to make neighbourhoods better and healthier places for all residents to live, work, learn, and play. Through funding from the Hamilton Community Foundation, Best Start Network, and with the help of many partners, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy engages residents to improve conditions for everyone in the neighbourhoods through an asset based, community development supported neighbourhood planning process.

People in all neighbourhoods deserve to be as healthy as they can be and deserve to live in vibrant places. By engaging residents to identify, plan, and lead the changes they want to see, residents can build on their strengths to address neighbourhood problems. To date, eight of the 11 identified neighbourhoods (refer to map on previous page) have developed neighbourhood action plans (NAPs) and are taking action based on their lived experiences. The City of Hamilton is committed to neighbourhoods and their plans by focusing on integrating and coordinating city services within targeted neighbourhoods.

“Sometimes, all the well meaning intentions and hard effort in the community just won’t create the full success needed; the community development worker and the city planner help to establish the strong planning foundation needed to achieve success”

Steve Rowe, Vice-chair, Keith Action Planning Team

Neighbourhood Planning Process

Transforming good neighbourhoods into great ones begins with a plan, and a great action plan is developed by residents. Our neighbourhood planning process brings community development and secondary planning together into one process. This combination of people and place-based planning creates action plans to make Hamilton’s neighbourhoods healthy, vibrant places for everyone. We have found, over the last year that energy around action in a neighbourhood can build until it creates its own momentum; sometimes it’s because of a specific event, or a large number of people being involved; but often it is the cumulative “buzz” that good things are starting to happen. It’s not really about the numbers of people involved; it’s about the chemistry that happens when people who really care about their neighbourhoods and their neighbours get together to make change.

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Asset-based, Resident-led Neighbourhood Planning

Our planning process uses an asset-based community development approach, which builds on the skills, strengths, and supports of residents, groups, and institutions to build stronger communities. This approach, blended with a land use planning process, results in unique neighbourhood plans that celebrate the strengths and address the weaknesses of Hamilton neighbourhoods.

Asset-based community development “starts with what is present in the community, the capacities of its residents and workers, the associational and institutional base of the area—not with what is absent, or with what is problematic, or with what the community needs.”

The development of asset-based, resident-led neighbourhood action plans depends on the relationships between residents, staff, and other neighbourhood stakeholders. The community development worker plays an essential role in building the relationships with residents on the Local Planning Team and the wider neighbourhood.

Each completed Neighbourhood Action Plan will lay out a clear vision for the future of the neighbourhood and describe specific projects that can be implemented, are achievable, and have widespread community support.

Each Neighbourhood Action Plan details meaningful and measurable action items that can reasonably be implemented within the five year timeframe of the plan. Most importantly, each plan identifies a resident lead, and if applicable a city staff or agency lead, who is responsible for each action item. Actions are funded through a variety of ways; the Hamilton Community Foundation small grants process, the Neighbourhood Development grants budget, other city departmental budgets, provincial ministries, federal departments, foundations and other funding bodies have also provided resources to support the many actions.

The Neighbourhood Action Strategies Office has developed a new resource; the Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit that can guide community groups through the planning process. The Toolkit has many useful tips, tools, and checklists and can be found at the website below.

Drive change in your neighbourhood!
For information on how you can begin an Action Planning Process in your neighbourhood please contact:

Suzanne Brown
Program Manager - Neighbourhood Action Strategy
Tel: 905-546-2424 ext. 4711
E-mail: suzanne.brown@hamilton.ca

To download the toolkit, visit www.hamilton.ca/neighbourhoods
When residents came together to develop Neighbourhood Action Plans, there was much optimism that the ideas in the plans would generate new investments of time, talent, and funding. With Action Plans completed in eight neighbourhoods, those new investments are coming to fruition. In some cases, there were common themes and actions across Action Plans and out of these common themes, new and exciting investments were developed and directed across many neighbourhoods.

The Neighbourhood Home Improvement Program has been a great example of “cross-neighbourhood” investment. Many of the Action Plans emphasized beautification in neighbourhoods. The Action Plans also emphasized the need for resident skill-building initiatives, and real training that could lead to successful employment. When the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities read the plans, they put two and two together and developed the Home Improvement Program, a training initiative that also improved and beautified homes in Neighbourhood Strategy neighbourhoods. In partnership with the City of Hamilton and Hamilton Community Foundation, the Threshold School of Building was the perfect agency to deliver the job-training component of this initiative. The City helped match residents who were currently unemployed with this training opportunity and coordinated a committee of staff and residents to review applications for exterior home renovation projects. 20 men and women applied to be the trainees and are currently working in the program to gain valuable job-ready skills while accomplishing much needed renovations to Hamilton’s priority neighbourhood homes.

“The two best parts of this project are seeing the relief and appreciation of the resident home owners who are receiving renovations that make their homes safe and healthy; and the dedication and pride of workmanship from the crew. That ‘pay it forward’ attitude is what is making this project such a great success.”

- John Grant, Executive Director of Threshold School of Building

When the training component ends in mid-October, these men and women will be assisted by Employment Services in Hamilton in finding them sustainable work.

The Neighbourhood Home Improvement Project focuses on exterior improvements to homes and hopes to complete 90 home improvements by the end of the October. The benefits of this pilot project to the neighbourhood and its residents were quickly seen. In the words of one crew member, “My favourite part of the job is learning skills that I never had before and being part of a great crew.” Another crew member stated that, aside from obtaining work experience, “being part of a positive change for Hamilton” is what is most important.

Residents have received many types of exterior renovations including repair to sheds, porches, back decks, walk ways, and fences. Many of these renovations addressed health and safety concerns of homeowners, who did not have the resources to make the repairs on their own.

One resident sent a thank you stating, “Who says good things don’t happen in this neighbourhood? Words can’t thank you enough for the extensive work the crew did on my front porch. I am more than grateful. THANK YOU!” Another resident wrote 20 separate thank you notes to all the crew and staff at Threshold. She pronounced the crew, “an army of hardhat angels that came to my rescue”.

This project exemplifies the fundamental tenant of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy;, that all neighbourhoods and residents have assets and when these assets come together, we truly make our neighbourhood’s better places to live, work, play and learn.
The Neighbourhood Action Strategy is intended to create change in neighbourhoods that will improve the lives of Hamilton residents. It is an innovative and holistic approach to community development, and is being attempted at a scale not often seen before. It is therefore important that we are able to say with confidence whether or not the strategy is working. In order to do this, we [the City] have partnered with university researchers, the Hamilton Community Foundation and the Social Planning and Research Council to comprehensively evaluate the strategy as it moves forward. The evaluation of the initiative has been a priority from the start and a comprehensive, multi-level strategy has been developed to monitor our progress, help us learn from our successes and challenges and ultimately, assess the impacts on residents living in our neighbourhoods.

The components of the evaluation include: 1) a survey that asks residents (at 2-year intervals) about the health and well-being of themselves and the neighbourhoods in which they live; 2) on-going monitoring of neighbourhood level indicators to assess changes over time; 3) an in-depth study to assess the impacts of community development workers supporting the neighbourhoods in their work, and; 4) an evaluation to assess the implementation of the neighbourhood plans. It is important to note that much of this evaluation work is being funded through grants obtained from outside agencies (i.e., Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, The Hamilton Community Foundation and the United Way) and is not being paid for by the City itself.

While the evaluation is still in its early stages, some interesting findings have begun to emerge from the neighbourhoods surveyed to-date, including:

- 72% of residents surveyed said that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their neighbourhood
- 91% of residents surveyed described the people in their neighbourhood as being “friendly” or “very friendly”
- 94% of residents surveyed said that they “agree” or “strongly agree” that they feel safe when they are outside during the day
- 54% of residents surveyed said that their neighbourhood was a “good”, “very good”, or “excellent” place to raise children

While there is a relatively high level of neighbourhood satisfaction and people generally feel safe, the fact that residents feel less positive about their neighbourhoods as places to raise children (at the heart of the City’s long term Vision) suggests that there is work to be done. To this end, residents were also asked about their priorities for improving their neighbourhoods in the survey. In general, the priorities identified through the survey align closely to those identified through the neighbourhood planning processes (e.g., neighbourhood beautification, safety and security, parks and green space, etc.).

Neighbourhood development is a complex and long-term endeavour. While we would all like to be able to see dramatic and immediate changes to the health and wellbeing of our residents living in the priority neighbourhoods, the nature of the work is such that we are not likely to see major changes to the health and well-being of neighbourhood residents for some time. We feel that we have the strategy and tools in place to be able to monitor this type of change when it occurs. Further, the evaluation process is critical to set the path for the future success of the initiative. By providing rapid and ongoing feedback to the CD workers and others involved in planning and implementation, this evaluation can also help address emerging challenges and improve practice as the strategy evolves.
Main Components of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Evaluation

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<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
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<td>How well is the Neighbourhood Strategy working?</td>
<td>How is the Neighbourhood Strategy affecting people’s lives?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the Community Development Approach During Intervention Planning (P.I. Sarah Wakefield, University of Toronto)</td>
<td>Hamilton Neighbourhoods Study (P.I. James R. Dunn, McMaster University)</td>
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- Formative process evaluation  
- Qualitative interviews with community Developers and resident-led Planning Teams, examining the process of the community development, including 1) how CDs and planning team members developed and worked towards goals; and 2) barriers and facilitators to community engagement and implementation |
| Timeline: January 2012 - June 2015 | • Longitudinal study of intervention outcomes  
• Door-to-door surveys to be conducted with randomly selected residents in six neighbourhoods (Stipley, Rolston, Keith, McQuesten, Stinson, and Beasley) before and after implementation |
| Evaluation of Plan Implementation (S. Wakefield and SPRC) | Neighbourhood-Level Indicators (P.I. Jeff Wingard, Structure Consulting) |
- Process evaluation of plan implementation  
- Process tracking surveys, interviews and focus groups with key actors and residents |
| Timeline: January 2013 - April 2015; longer-term evaluation (2015-2017) possible. | • Draws on secondary data to report on 8 domains and 16 indicators of community well-being with neighbourhood-level data |
| | Timeline: Baseline report completed in April 2012. Repeated as needed, likely after 3 years. |

Neighbourhood Leadership Institute

In May 2013, through support from the Hamilton Community Foundation and the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Office, a ceremony was held for the first graduating class of the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI). Meeting once a month since October 2012, the program, created around an asset based approach to learning, built on and enhanced the existing strengths and skills of our resident leaders. The NLI allowed the resident leaders to learn together to gain a better understanding of how to work with their neighbours and facilitate change.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Class of 2013, which included 19 neighbours, from 9 city neighbourhoods.
Since 2005, the Beasley Neighbourhood Association (BNA) and Charter Team (Charter signed June 2011) have been very involved in improving their downtown neighbourhood. This year started off with the presentation of the neighbourhood plan, the painting of the Badger Mural in McLaren Park, the McLaren Soccer Tournament, Beasley Arize (a breakdancing competition), the Beasley Winter Carnival with ice skating and other fun activities for kids, and the Beasley Fair. More recently, the BNA held their annual BBQ and were joined by the Downtown Mosque. Over 1000 hotdogs were served to area residents on a beautiful summer afternoon. The Hamilton Youth Steel Drum Orchestra entertained the crowd with an excellent performance and among other activities, the NGEN Breakdancing Team showed off their skills, while teaching kids and youth some exciting dance moves.

The Beasley Neighbourhood banners were raised over the summer. With over 40 colourful banners it’s hard not to feel a sense of pride throughout the neighbourhood. We would like to thank Cogeco and Councilor Farr for their support and Paul Elia for his wonderful designs. In addition to the Neighbourhood banners, the Beasley Community Mural will be going up on the side of the old Beasley Community Centre. It will be a colourful mural that will bring a smile to the whole community, but especially to the children who helped design it. Summer 2013 also brought the first annual Soccer Summerfest (a week long camp for kids) which closed out with the second annual McLaren Cup. The long-term Beasley Park Redevelopment Planning Team also met in June and September 2013. ‘It’s very exciting to imagine what can happen in this already wonderful park’.

The Beasley Neighbourhood Action Plan identified minor improvements for McLaren Park and it is great to see neighbourhood engagement with the City of Hamilton around this issue. We would like to thank Councilor Farr and the Neighbourhood Action Planning Team as they highlighted this as a much needed action.
The BNA is one of the only Neighbourhoods in Canada to have drafted its own community charter, a public agreement to work together to tackle neighbourhood issues.
“I was so impressed by how much the walk leaders took on. They gave so much of themselves. Their passion for their community came through. And then all the people who came out and learned new perspectives about an area or found like-minded people. Getting people to get out, walk through the neighbourhood, talk to their neighbours and talk about their neighbourhood. That was the important thing and that’s exactly what happened.”

–Mary Bowness
Crown Point resident and coordinator of Hamilton’s Jane’s Walks
Jane’s Walk, now a global phenomenon, was pioneered in Toronto to bring attention not only to urban neighbourhoods, but also to the walkability (or unwalkability, as the case may be) of them. Named after urban planner Jane Jacobs, the walks are an annual event, on the same weekend in every country. In Hamilton, two City Councillors, entrepreneurs, residents, historians and storytellers led walks to talk about their passion for Hamilton and for their community. The point of the Neighbourhood Action Plans is to move the talking into action and with the 2013 Jane’s Walk, Crown Point got a whole lot of people talking, and walking.

Dozens of people joined each of the walks across the city in May, to walk and talk about history, culture, nature, development, economics and of course, walking. This was a step in the progress of Crown Point’s Goal B action area which focuses on walking, cycling, gardens and more. After years of partnering with McMaster’s Health in the Hubs initiative to focus on the walkability of the area, the team observed that, “all the research has been done, the plans are in place – how do we make it happen?” and the answer that came up was simple. Get people walking. So they signed up to coordinate Jane’s Walks in Crown Point and it quickly spread across the city.

Get Involved With Crown Point!

Contact:
Rebecca Doll, Community Development Worker
E-mail: rebecca@kboysandgirlsclub.com
Tel: 289-489-3942

Meeting Dates:
3rd Monday of the Month: 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Meeting Location:
Compass Point Church - 80 Ellis Ave, Hamilton

To get more information on the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, visit www.hamilton.ca/neighbourhoods
David Creek Community Planning Team (DCCPT) had a very busy year. One of our goals was to connect with the local community, including area schools. We did this by talking to people throughout the neighbourhood and when we were riding the bus. Flyers were delivered to homes and apartments, but we feel word of mouth is the best way to connect. Planning team members love to talk about what we are doing and what the future holds for our community, which is surrounded by busy streets and nestled under the escarpment in east end Hamilton. One of the many events for the DCCPT was with a business, Coconut Cove Community Event. This event raised awareness for the Community Planning Team.

Other events we have run include community clean ups at 4 sites (Greenhill and Quigley, Tindale, Sir Wilfrid Laurier School, Pine Grove), and Easter Egg Hunts at 2 locations (350 Quigley and Pine Grove) where the children had smiles on their faces a mile wide and the parents were having a great time too.

Get Involved With Davis Creek!

Contact:
Judy Kloosterman, Community Development Worker
E-mail: judy.kloosterman@wesleyurbanministries.ca
Tel: 905-516-6383

Meeting Dates:
2nd Tuesday of the Month: 6pm – 8pm

Meeting Location:
Sir Wilfrid Laurier Recreation Centre - 60 Albright Rd, Hamilton

To get more information on the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and the Davis Creek Neighbourhood Action Plan, visit www.hamilton.ca/neighbourhoods
When we first began the neighbourhood planning process in 2012, we met at different locations around the community, hoping this would bring more community members to the table from different areas of Davis Creek. Unfortunately, this confused community members so starting in September 2013, we will now meet at Sir Wilfrid Laurier Recreation Centre on the second Tuesday of the month.

One of the many actions identified in our neighbourhood plan is traffic. We have begun to work on these issues on the Mt. Albion, Quigley Road, and Greenhill streets. We have worked with the traffic division to put up school zone signs and 40km/h speed limit signs around the school.

Through a grant administered by the Hamilton Community Foundation, DDCPT in partnership with the Hamilton Public Library held a Summer Literacy Day Camp to assist over 80 children with their reading and writing skills. Our future plans include working with Green Venture to create a safe streets plan. We would like to see improvements at bus stops with more garbage cans, emergency phones on Quigley and Greenhill by King street, arms at the 3 major railroad crossings in the community, and benches on the streets for pedestrians to sit.

The Pine Grove tenants organized a trip to the Royal Botanical Gardens for Davis Creek residents, we filled a bus and everyone had great fun. ■

“We the neighbourhood has always been a diverse and engaged neighbourhood, but the formalization of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy has allowed the various groups within Davis Creek to come together and achieve many early successes, particularly around our schools.”

- David Deslandes

A member of the DCCPT attends other community events hosted by the schools to educate parents in the community about the work of the planning team.
Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Strategy

**Timeline**

- **April 2002**: Hamilton Community Foundation launches Growing Roots, Strengthening Neighbourhoods program, piloting the use of community development workers and small grants in Jamesville, Beasley and McQuesten neighbourhoods.
- **February 2004**: HCF board takes unprecedented step of directing unrestricted funds to poverty prevention, alleviation, reduction through Tackling Poverty Together (TPT), a $3 million initiative.
- **June 2008**: HCF evolves poverty reduction focus to a neighbourhood approach through TPT II – Building Strong Neighbourhoods, a $5 million initiative. Establishes local planning teams in six focus communities: Jamesville, McQuesten, Keith, Wever, South Sherman and “CATCH”.
- **June 2009**: Tackling Poverty Together II expanded to Riverdale and Crown Point neighbourhoods.
- **September 2010**: Creation of Neighbourhood Action Strategy Initiative.
- **June 2011**: Approval of Neighbourhood Action Strategy Components.
- **October 2011**: Neighbourhood Action begins; Keith & Neighbours
Neighbourhood Planning in Stinson

MARCH 2012
Neighbourhood Action Planning formalized in McQuesten.

APRIL 2012
HCF invites Governor General David Johnston to meet with McQuesten Community Planning team.

SEPTEMBER 2012
Neighbourhood Action Plans endorsed by Hamilton City Council for the Beasley, Keith, McQuesten and Stinson Neighbourhoods.

JANUARY 2013
Neighbourhood Action Planning completed in Riverdale and Davis Creek.

MARCH 2013
Neighbourhood Action Planning completed in South Sherman.

MAY 2013
Neighbourhood Leadership Institute graduates first class.

JUNE 2013
Neighbourhood Action Planning completed in Jamesville.

OCTOBER 2013
First Annual Update

Community Planning
“I was really moved by all the people who showed up and by the positive impact the event has had on the neighbourhood since then,” says Brenda Duke, one of the three organizers along with Lise Graham and Sonya Mills. “People are talking to each other, sharing things, helping each other out. We’ve showed each other that we can make changes and keep things going. It is inspiring.”
The idea of building on the strengths of the community was never so tangibly evident as at the clean-up of the Birch Avenue Green Space this spring. The Gibson Landsdale Community Planning Team initiated a clean-up and partnered with the City’s Public Works department for training, tools and supplies. The “park” in question was a gravel parking area under the hydro lines that had been cleaned-up only a year ago, but this second phase of effort focused on remedial cleaning and then landscaping. To achieve this, the organizers planned to spread mulch in the previously cleared beds and plant flowers that had been donated by neighbours. Having no budget for this event, they relied on their own resources and brought cookies and lemonade for refreshments. People came early to help and started pitching in with the work, but also the fun; prizes, including new bikes and flower boxes were donated by community partners; pizza and subs were ordered by the Barton Street BIA; and paint and tools were supplied by a local business to refresh the fences and graffiti-tagged garage doors; live music performance; croquet and more. People in the neighbourhood saw the work that was happening and the flowers being planted and brought more from their own homes. Nearby neighbours came over to water the plants and offered to do so regularly. Collectively, residents built on the strengths of the community for a lovely day, and for a sustainable green-space in their midst.
“It is very important for our team and our community to be able to share our ideas and needs while building on the many neighbourhood strengths (assets) of the Jamesville area.”

- Liliana Figueredo
It’s been a busy year for the Jamesville Hub. From finalizing our Neighbourhood Action plan, building a stronger brand and hosting our first events, it’s been a fun ride and we’re only getting started! In December the Hub and some of its friends hosted the Jamesville Fun Fair at Sir John A Macdonald. There was information and activities provided by several different agencies in the neighbourhood, prizes, and cotton candy. Many youth from a neighbouring youth program helped fill the gym and the Chinese Seniors Dance Team and Tai Chi team both put on presentations.

The Jamesville Hub chairs Liliana Figuereido and David Stephens presented the Neighbourhood Action Plan to Hamilton City Council in June 2013. It was received with great excitement and lots of questions. After the plan was presented Councilor Farr assigned resources to one of our biggest projects; exploring the possibility of finding a permanent central neighbourhood Community Centre, a space where neighbours and groups can gather to get to know one another and run a variety of activities and programs. We will work with the City and other interested parties to complete a Feasibility Study in the fall.

This summer we held movie nights in the Jamesville City housing complex. The evenings were filled with popcorn and entertainment. What a fantastic way to spend a warm summer evening...with your neighbours!

Get Involved With Jamesville!

Contact: Brandon Braithwaite, Community Development Worker
E-mail: bbraithwaite@ascy.ca
Tel: 905-746-2382

Meeting Dates:
Last Thursday of every month: 6:30pm – 8pm

Meeting Location:
Hamilton Central Library - 55 York Blvd, Hamilton

To get more information on the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and the Jamesville Neighbourhood Action Plan, visit www.hamilton.ca/neighborhoods
“Change does not happen until someone decides to make a difference. Well, change is here.”
—Barb Teichmann
You have read about the Neighbourhood Home Improvement Program on page 3 of this report. This project idea came from a resident of the Keith Neighbourhood. Barb Teichmann is a part time volunteer, full time parent to 2 very active grandsons, resident and tireless promoter of the Keith Neighbourhood. In October 2011, at the first meeting of the Keith Hub planning team, Barb asked us what we thought we could do for her neighbourhood this time that was different than every other time the city or researchers or well intentioned service folks came calling. That same night she also challenged the group to find a way to help homeowners earning a modest income repair their century homes.

In Keith Neighbourhood 70% of residents own their own home and their houses are on average 96 years old. These residents are also among the most modest income earners in the city. Keith neighbours know how to save a buck, but repairs to these houses are periodically more than even the thriftiest among us can manage.

Barb has a history of bringing honesty and dignity to problems like these, so it’s no surprise that this idea came from her. Barb and others helped lead the 10 year (!) fund raising effort to refit their neighbourhood park with splash-pad and playground equipment. She volunteered at Robert Land School for years and with the help of a team of moms, checked and rechecked the heads of students to take a school head lice epidemic down to zero cases. Instead of shaming children or their parents, this group provided treatments, new combs for every kid unlucky enough to catch lice, and education to help those kids avoid re-exposing themselves.

Barb now has quite a few legacies. We all have that park. Each one of those former Robert Land students who received help from this group of moms received new combs and some dignity in an otherwise frustrating and embarrassing situation. Now upwards of 80 homeowners and their families, and 21 newly trained construction workers are respectively house-proud and skills-proud because of Barb’s innovative, common sense idea, and compassionate heart.

Get Involved With Keith!

Contact:
Laura Ryan, Community Development Worker
E-mail: lryan@sprc.hamilton.on.ca
Tel: 905-317-1791

Meeting Dates:
1st Thursday of every month: 6pm – 8pm

Meeting Location:
Eva Rothwell Centre - 460 Wentworth St N, Hamilton

To get more information on the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and the Keith Neighbourhood Action Plan, visit www.hamilton.ca/neighbourhoods
Where does the time go? It seems like just last week we were gathering a small but committed group of neighbours from across McQuesten to help us develop an Action Plan for our neighbourhood. Here we are one year later celebrating some of the outstanding work done by the McQuesten Community Planning Team, together with our partners at the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation.

The success that we have enjoyed here in McQuesten over the last number of years can be directly attributed to the outstanding resident leadership that has become the cornerstone of the work we do. This year several members of our local planning team attended the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute to build their capacity including Monika Ciolek, who in January of this year was elected to the role of Chair, replacing Pat Reid who filled that role during the previous term and was instrumental in guiding this community through the planning process.

Some of the highlights of this year’s work have been:

• One of the first Action Teams to mobilize has become known as the Party Planners. Responding to the somewhat negative stereotype painted of the neighbourhood they planned two events that would prove to be instrumental in enlightening the broader community of the “New McQuesten”. The first was an “Evening with the Chief” held at the East Kiwanis Community Centre. Hamilton Police Chief Glenn De Caire was invited to speak to our neighbours about the changing role of Hamilton Police Services within the neighbourhood and the positive effect that has had.

• The second was the 5th annual CRAWL, a neighbourhood BBQ and social that invites residents and service providers to mingle, get to know what programs are being offered during the coming summer months, sign up for those programs and just relax and welcome the anticipated summer months that will bring our community out and get them involved.

Get Involved With McQuesten!

Contact:
David Derbyshire, Community Development Worker
E-mail: david.derbyshire@wesleyurbanministries.com
Tel: 905-975-0980

Meeting Dates:
2nd Monday of every month: 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Meeting Location:
East Kiwanis Community Centre - 785 Britannia Ave, Hamilton

To get more information on the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and the McQuesten Neighbourhood Action Plan, visit www.hamilton.ca/neighbourhoods
• Strengthened relationships with the McMaster School of Nursing, the CASTLE Project, the Juravinski Cancer Centre and the Ministry of Health have led to the introduction of a mobile cancer screening coach to educate neighbours of the importance of early testing for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer, while making that testing available in the neighbourhood.

• Work is ongoing along a food security continuum that will address the food desert that exists within McQuesten with the ultimate goal of a robust Food Centre. We are in the early stages of the creation of a pilot for an urban farm in McQuesten. Increased programming for seniors, adults, youth and children has been mobilized through resident leadership and strong collaboration with our service provider partners.

These and many more relationships are being built and more and more neighbours and service provider partners are stepping up and as Pat Reid invited all to do when the plans were first developed, “Get on Board” and join us on our journey.

Thanks to Suzanne Brown and the Neighbourhood Strategy office at the City of Hamilton as well as Councillor Merulla for their support in the work we do. Also to the Hamilton Community Foundation, Matt Goodman and Sharon Charters for your support and guidance over the many years we have had the pleasure of working together. All our service provider partners but most importantly to all of the neighbours without whom this work would be impossible. You are too many to name but are so vitally important to everything we do. We have said it before and I will say it again we are “Better Together.”

“11 years ago a group of seniors concerned about the lack of safety in the neighbourhood formed a group called the Martha Movers. These folks were the ones who started the conversation about how to make our neighbourhood a safe place. The Chief and Sgt. Tracey our local Crime Manager confirmed today a significant decrease in crime in our neighbourhood, they acknowledged that the hard worked initiated by the Movers and carried on by the McQuesten Community Planning Team has had a positive impact on our neighbourhood.”

- Rose Laws, McQuesten Neighbour
The Riverdale Community Planning Team (RCPT) is made up of diverse residents that live in the Riverdale community. There are many different languages spoken in this very unique community of apartment buildings, bounded by 4 very busy streets. At our RCPT meetings, we have translators and make sure our meetings are understood by all who attend.

One new and exciting program at the Riverdale Community Centre is the Punjabi Thursday Tea. This is for seniors from the Riverdale neighbourhood to get together to build trust and friendship while making and serving each other Chai tea. After a while, as their comfort grew, the seniors started to play cards together and are talking to each other (through a translator). Some of the issues they have brought up are: health issues and socialization/isolation. Over the next couple of months the RCPT will look into helping in these areas.

Based on conversations at the planning team table, new programs were created at the community centre, for example a free Mother and Daughter Only Swim. Councilor Collins has used the Riverdale Community Centre and Laurier Recreation Centre as pilots for community WiFi, Wii, and a big screen TV. The community has embraced these new changes. There have been more conversations on the objectives and actions in the community plans with recreation staff. With the help of the Recreation Development Business Consultant, St. Charles space has been booked to help Riverdale increase programming.

The priority goal in Riverdale is affordable, clean rental units. The Tenant Housing Collaborative (THC) has been established to work on this goal. The THC is comprised of community residents and service providers who have come together to improve the quality of tenant housing in Riverdale.

Get Involved With Riverdale!

Contact:
Judy Kloosterman, Community Development Worker
E-mail: judy.kloosterman@wesleyurbanministries.ca
Tel: 905-516-6383

Meeting Dates:
Last Saturday of the month: 10:30am-12:30pm

Meeting Location:
Dominic Agostino Riverdale Community Centre - 150 Violet Dr, Stoney Creek

To get more information on the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and the Riverdale Neighbourhood Action Plan, visit www.hamilton.ca/neighbourhoods
Through a Hamilton Community Foundation grant given to the RCPT, and in partnership with the Hamilton Public Library, Riverdale will have a Summer Literacy Camp this year. Books will be given to the children at the end of the camp and healthy snacks are provided. The parents love it and over 80 children registered. A small projects grant also supported a free children’s soccer league run by resident volunteers.

The second goal in Riverdale is food security. Riverdale has the highest concentration of poverty in the city. It also has the most residents, over 7500 people, living in an area less than one square mile. Riverdale resident conversations around poverty and food security issues grew into formal meetings involving residents of both the Riverdale and Davis Creek neighbourhoods, Community Development Worker Judy Kloosterman and Ward 5 Councillor Chad Collins. Two years later, the East Hamilton Food Bank Working Group is nearly 40 residents strong, and close to reaching their goal of opening a new food bank in the area between the Red Hill Valley Parkway and Grays Road. The new food back will be an achievement for both Riverdale and Davis Creek residents, as both neighbourhoods have come together to support this initiative.

In order to engage the broader community, the community developer met with 73 teachers at Glendale High School. The feedback was very positive. As a result of this meeting, one of the teachers has become an active member of the Riverdale Community Planning Team. The Riverdale Community Planning Team and the Davis Creek Community Planning Team are exploring to set up youth committees and have youth sitting on the planning teams as strong voice for youth issues in the community, because of this connection with Glendale.
The 11th neighbourhood to begin the neighbourhood action planning process is Rolston. You can find Rolston in Ward 8, on the central/west mountain. Because this neighbourhood is the last to start the planning process, it will benefit from the knowledge and many lessons learned from the 10 neighbourhoods that have gone before.

We learned that children and youth see and understand the very same things that adults do, just in their own youthful way. It is incredibly powerful and inspiring when children and adults share the same hopes for change. So in Rolston, we started our work with children at Annunciation of Our Lord Roman Catholic Elementary School and children from the after school activities program at the Montcalm Community House to find out what living in Rolston is like. Coordinated by the community development worker, the photovoice project was supported by our Public Health department’s nurse, Sharon MacKinnon and 4 nursing students from McMaster University.

The project is called photovoice and it works exceptionally well with children. Although children can see and understand complex things, they often struggle to explain in words what they see, feel or want to change. Instead of just asking them to tell us what is good and what they like about their neighbourhood, or what they want to see changed- we ask them to show us by taking pictures. We ask them the routes they walk and the places they go or play in their neighbourhood. We also ask them where they don’t or can’t go, and they love to tell us why they do what they do! Walking routes are then designed by adult facilitators and the children ‘lead’ a small group for a tour along that route. They bring cameras, maps and note paper to capture what they see. The pictures that they take start the conversation about change.

The children, 4-14 years old, showed the adults historical buildings and old growth bush lots, graffiti and bus stops. They knew where caregivers struggle to jump a tall curb with a buggy or a wheel chair, and the

Get Involved With Rolston!

Contact:
Laura Ryan, Community Development Worker
E-mail: lryan@sprc.hamilton.on.ca
Tel: 905-317-1791

Meeting Dates:
TBD

Meeting Location:
TBD

To get more information on the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, visit www.hamilton.ca/neighbourhoods
short cuts that “everyone” uses but that have some safety issues that could be addressed. They know their neighbourhood; the good, the great, the disappointing, and the dangerous. They asked for tree houses and play grounds, but also stop signs, Mosques, less smoking and swearing, and more friendly people.

What they created is a fantastic cache of photos along with a list of assets and needs that will be handed directly to our adult planning team. They voted on 6 priority ideas for change that will be brought to our final planning report. There will be an art show that they will present in the neighbourhood and at their school to residents, friends, teachers, and caregivers; and you saw it at Supercrawl 2013 and will be able to see it at the Winter Artcrawl on James Street North!
“Going ‘live’ had a big impact on me,” says Natasha Murphy. “The response wasn’t just enthusiastic, it was overwhelming. It validated all the work. Seeing how many people were encouraged to sign up on the website was great. Our committee worked really well together, including Dawn McIlmoyle, Lee McIlmoyle, Mike Montreuil and Ralph Myers, and now we are refocusing on our next tasks.”
The Stinson Community Association approached the City of Hamilton in 2011, and requested to be a part of the newly minted Neighbourhood Development Strategy. Based on neighbourhood statistics and the enthusiasm of the SCA, Stinson became the second neighbourhood to begin the neighbourhood action planning process in the fall of 2011. After many long months of meetings, discussions, consultations, and revisions, Lucio Barcaroli, the chair of the planning committee presented the Stinson Neighbourhood Action Plan to City Council in the fall of 2012.

One of the priorities in the Stinson Neighbourhood Plan was resident engagement and relationship building. Communication is key to engagement and a good and reliable way of connecting residents together was envisioned. When the Stinson Community set about improving their communications infrastructure, they had some very asset-based values in mind; inclusivity, accessibility, shared responsibility. First out of the gate was the new website, set up on a user-friendly Wordpress platform. It is free, easy to teach, easy to use, and makes it possible to have a team of people updating the site. It also has world-class tools and appearance.

The site now manages the email list through its blogging component so that anyone who wants to can get regular updates from the association by adding their own email address. Minutes and agenda of the monthly meetings are posted and archived on the site, events are promoted, and a community calendar gathers all the activities into one place. The site showcases the results of the Team’s branding initiative (one of the Stinson Neighbourhood Action Plan items), and is a one-stop shop for everything Stinson.

The re-development of Carter Park and the outdoor space of Central Memorial Recreation Centre is another key priority for the Stinson neighbourhood. Work began with a park make-over in the fall of 2012 and planning for major improvements and the creation of a “civic square” are underway.

Get Involved With Stinson!

Contact:
Rebecca Doll, Community Development Worker
E-mail: rebecca@kboysandgirlsclub.com
Tel: 289-489-3942

Meeting Dates:
2nd Thursday of every month: 7pm – 9pm

Meeting Location:
Central Memorial Recreation Centre - 93 West Ave S, Hamilton

To get more information on the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and the Stinson Neighbourhood Action Plan, visit www.hamilton.ca/neighbourhoods
Some say a picture is worth a thousand words and in the case of the South Sherman Community Planning Team (SSCPT) nothing could be closer to the truth. Over the past year a growing number of neighbours have stepped up to bring their talents to the table and mobilize those gifts to help implement the South Sherman Plan. Under the committed leadership of Steve Calverley, the group has embraced the Action Plan and has divided into teams to address the identified priorities of the plan. Each team functions separately using the Mission, Vision and Values of the SSCPT as their guide and are busy developing and implementing a strategy to address a neighbourhood issue. Meeting in homes and cafes across the neighbourhood all Action Teams come together on a monthly basis at the South Sherman Community Planning Team meetings to review progress to date, recruit additional assets to the cause and see how their work fits in the overall picture of the South Sherman neighbourhood.

The South Sherman “Spokes” is one such team. Lead by Patty Clydesdale, they are developing a network of community connectors or Spokes who get to know the people on their street or their block and serve as a conduit of information between the SSCPT. Most importantly they build and foster relationships within their part of the neighbourhood. They also build the bonds of friendship that will help make the South Sherman community strong and vibrant for years to come.

In a related activity we have the often imitated but never duplicated “South Sherman Hub News,” another important vehicle in building relationships and connections across the neighbourhood. Championed

Get Involved With South Sherman!

Contact:
David Derbyshire, Community Development Worker
E-mail: david.derbyshire@wesleyurbanministries.ca
Tel: 905-975-0980

Meeting Dates:
1st Monday of the month: 7pm – 9 pm

Meeting Location:
St. Giles Church - 85 Holton Ave, Hamilton

To get more information on the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and the South Sherman Neighbourhood Action Plan, visit www.hamilton.ca/neighbourhoods
by that community connector extraordinaire Rebecca Doll, the SSHN’s is currently entering its 3rd year of print and after some initial financial support from the SSCPT, the Hamilton Community Foundation and the City of Hamilton, it is rapidly approaching financial sustainability. This incredible bi-monthly publication is produced and delivered by a dedicated team of volunteers symptomatic of the ‘can do’ spirit that is overcoming our neighbourhood.

These are but two of the outstanding examples of how the South Sherman community is putting their shoulders to the wheel and pushing the Neighbourhood Action Plan forward.

The task ahead will not be easy and we are realistic enough to recognize their will be some huge hurdles to overcome.

We are grateful to our many partners in this work we have chosen. The support of the City of Hamilton through the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, our Councillor Bernie Morelli and his assistant Nick Westoll, have been pivotal in the development and implementation of our Plan. The Hamilton Community Foundation for 5 years of providing us with among many other things the support of a Community Development worker to help us recognize and build on our assets. To our service provider partners, who successfully applied for grants from the Hamilton Community Foundation to support the implementation of our Action Plan; The Elizabeth Fry Society, The Downstairs Kitchen, the YMCA, HARRRP and to the too numerous to mention service provider partners who attend and share their assets at our monthly meetings as well as on our Action Teams.

Thank you to St. Giles and Dan Peace who have been our charitable partner and home base of the SSCPT. Dan’s commitment to this neighbourhood was the starting point for our journey 5 years ago and continues unabated to this day.

Finally, a most sincere thank you to all of the neighbours of our South Sherman community who have shared their talents, time, knowledge and spirit to help us work together to make South Sherman a better place to live, work and raise our families.