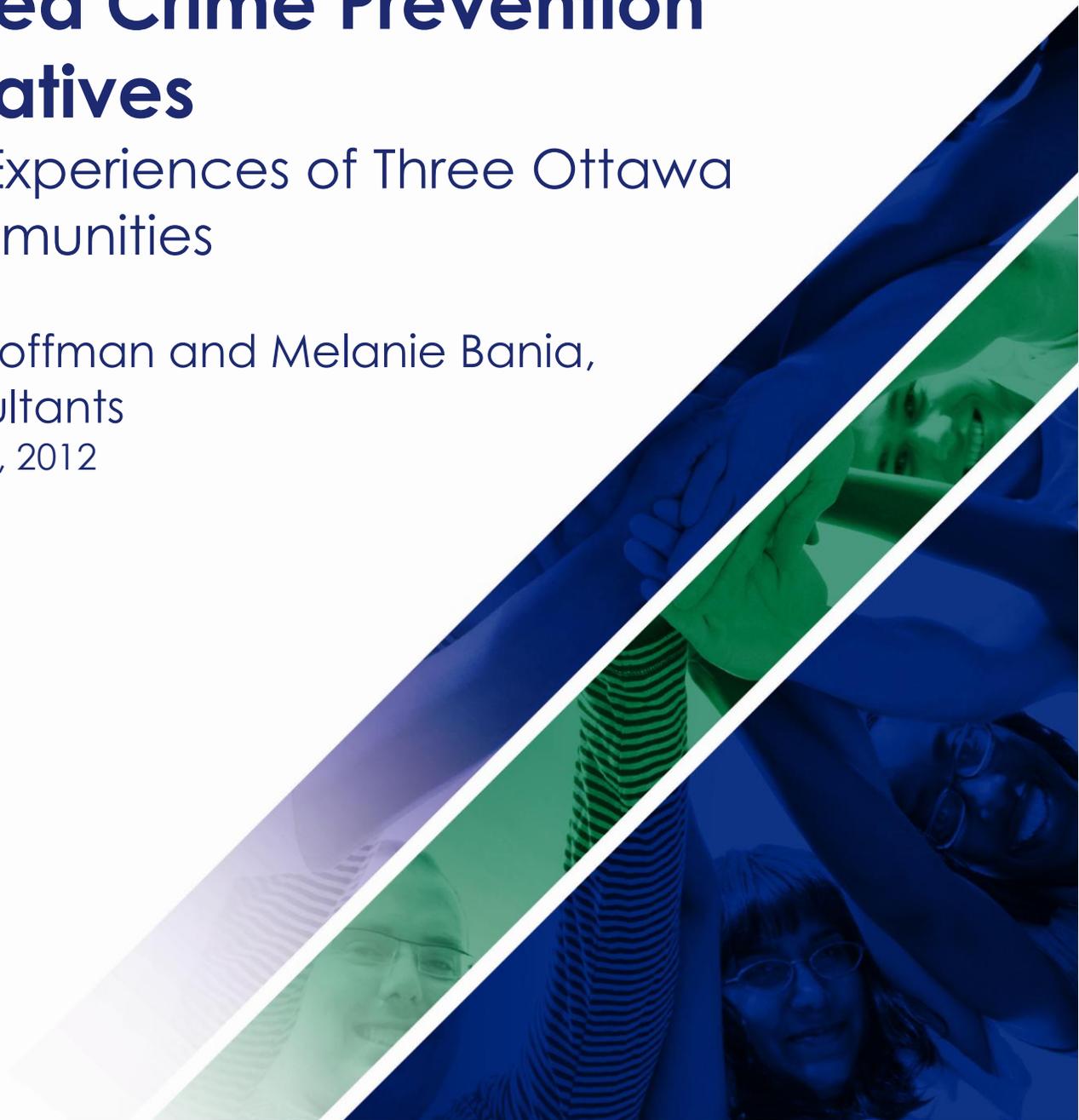




# Learning from Community- Based Crime Prevention Initiatives

The Experiences of Three Ottawa  
Communities

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## **Purpose**

Over the past four years, Crime Prevention Ottawa (CPO) helped to establish three comprehensive, community-based crime prevention initiatives: Lowertown, Our Home; Together for Vanier; and United Neighbours. CPO commissioned community and crime prevention consultants, Ken Hoffman and Melanie Bania, to work closely with the staff involved in the three projects to help them plan and evaluate their work.

The main purpose of this document is to contribute to both the theory and practice relating to community-based crime prevention. This work was driven by a desire to help communities move beyond simply reporting “what they did” toward critically examining why they chose certain interventions, and assessing the impact of these initiatives. By effectively capturing these experiences and learnings, these communities and others like them are well-placed to learn more from one other, share best practices in community-based crime prevention and strengthen their work.

This report presents the outcomes of our efforts, including:

- A comprehensive listing of the community-based projects and initiatives undertaken in each of the three communities;
- The Theory of Change, developed jointly by the three communities, which describes the conditions that need to be in place to produce changes in community safety; and
- Three case studies that illustrate the impact of community-based crime prevention initiatives on residents in each community.

## **Background**

Community-based crime prevention initiatives offer the potential to bring together a wide range of stakeholders to focus their energies and resources on crime prevention. The approach offers potential benefits that are particularly significant in three main areas:

- Broadly-based approaches can have a much greater impact on the range of factors and conditions which can contribute to criminal behaviour than enforcement alone;

- The range of stakeholders involved allows for a much greater range of possible responses to criminal behaviour, including joint action between stakeholders and responses that go beyond the capacity of stakeholders acting unilaterally; and,
- Initiatives have greater potential for sustainability because there is broad support and mobilization of resources from across the community.

The complexity of these initiatives, however, makes them challenging to develop and implement. Some of the most common challenges include:

- Understanding the situation in the community (and how this situation changes over time);
- Determining where to start in order to address complex community issues;
- Identifying and pulling together the “right” players in the community in order to take action;
- Supporting the various players to work effectively together; and,
- Assessing the impact of the initiative in the community.

## **Crime Prevention Ottawa’s Role**

Crime Prevention Ottawa (CPO) was created in 2005 with a mission to contribute to crime reduction and enhanced community safety through collaborative, evidence-based crime prevention. The goals of CPO are to:

- Implement specific targeted crime prevention programs and to support programs through appropriate community agencies and associations;
- Assist and support community groups and the City in acquiring, developing or enhancing the tools needed to operate programs to increase safety;
- Seek the funds and create partnerships essential for sustaining long-term crime prevention programs;
- Promote policy solutions to issues of crime and disorder; and,
- Monitor and evaluate on an ongoing basis the progress and impacts of plans and implementation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.crimepreventionottawa.ca/en/who-we-are/terms-of-reference](http://www.crimepreventionottawa.ca/en/who-we-are/terms-of-reference).

In 2007, CPO decided to fund community-based crime prevention initiatives in three communities: Ensemble pour Vanier/Together for Vanier through the Vanier Community Service Centre, United Neighbours through the Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre, and Lowertown, Our Home/Basse-Ville, notre chez nous through the Lowertown Community Resource Centre. These projects were required to apply to CPO for funding and to report on results on a yearly basis. Some of the projects have been successful in attracting support from other funders as well.

In each of these cases, CPO played a number of important roles, particularly in the early stages of the initiatives, as follows:

- Acted as a catalyst to bring together the various partners and community leaders to hold initial conversations about community safety and how they could start to work together to address them. CPO helped to engage key participants such as the Ottawa Police Service, the City of Ottawa, social agencies, the business community and others;
- Supported the development of Steering Committees in each community and provided support to the leadership of these committees;
- Provided strategic advice to the Steering Committees on issues such as data collection and interpretation, community consultation, etc.;
- Supported skills development and training opportunities for the Steering Committee leaders;
- Provided initial funding to hire staff to coordinate community initiatives;
- Provided ongoing support to the Steering Committees and working groups in the management of challenging issues, such as drug dealing and prostitution;
- Helped transfer knowledge and lessons learned between communities; and,
- Helped the Steering Committees and working groups develop a stable base and structures, as well as contacts with other funders, to help sustain the work at a local level.

## **Community Initiatives**

Since 2007, Lowertown, Pinecrest-Queensway and Vanier have developed and implemented a remarkable variety of initiatives. Their efforts stand as a testament to the creativity and initiative in each community. While some of the initiatives are similar in nature, each community developed an approach that fits with the culture, the issues and the local context in the community. It is also important to note how each community made optimal use of its own local resources and volunteer energy.

The following is a list of the main crime prevention initiatives carried out by the three communities:

### ***Lowertown, Our Home (LOH)***

- Established a Coordinating Committee with the participation of various agency partners and residents. Main partner organizations include: Lowertown Community Resource Centre (LCRC), CPO, Ottawa Community Housing (OCH), Ottawa Police Service, City Councillor Mathieu Fleury, Patro d'Ottawa, Lowertown East Residents' Committee, Action Logement, Options Bytown, Lowertown Good Neighbours Community House, Centre de service Guigues, Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation, Shepherds of Good Hope, John Howard Society of Ottawa, and United Way/Centraide of Ottawa;
- Conducted bilingual surveys and community forums to bring residents together to identify community concerns;
- Organized numerous community gatherings (information sessions, workshops, barbecues and lunches);
- Held information sessions combined with dinners at prioritized Ottawa Community Housing buildings to hear the concerns of residents and discuss crime prevention strategies;
- Organized outreach activities and celebrations such as Winterfest and Canada Day in community parks that have a high perception of crime;
- Organized Movies in the Park to encourage residents to use Jules Morin Park in positive ways;
- Organized a parent support group that was facilitated in Arabic and Somali;
- Performed outreach to local schools;
- Organized a Partners' Committee, which receives monthly incident reports from police on current issues;
- Organized a Community Capacity Building Project to develop the leadership capacity of local youth;
- Organized a strategic planning retreat attended by 35 residents from various population groups and over 16 community agencies;
- Supports OCH Healthy Communities Initiative;
- Facilitates resident-led Walkabouts to identify and report safety issues;
- Coordinates and conducts Community Clean-ups;
- Facilitates and supports a Residents' Committee that meets monthly; and,

- Facilitates and chairs the Jules Morin Park Revitalization Committee, coordinating the collaborative participation of community partners, including Councillor Mathieu Fleury, The City of Ottawa, Patro d'Ottawa, OCH and representatives from the LCRC's child and youth program, as well as the community developer. This Committee facilitates the community consultation process and aims to host a community forum to receive additional feedback on the proposed plan and organize the new park's launch.

### **Together for Vanier (T4V)**

- Established a Steering Committee, including the following partners: Vanier Community Service Centre, CPO, OCH, Ottawa Police Service, City Councillor Mathieu Fleury, Vanier Community Association, Vanier Beautification, Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, Ottawa Public Health, Centre Richelieu-Vanier, Multi-Faith Housing Initiative. \*Partners have varied throughout the years;
- Carried out community surveys, community forums and a recent community retreat to bring residents together to discuss local concerns, such as security, sense of belonging, priorities, etc.;
- Helped establish Vanier Community Association (VCA). VCA now has four working groups: Parks and Recreation, Sustainable Development and Infrastructure, Health and Safety, and Communications and Outreach;
- Initiated park clean-ups through the Beautification Committee;
- Tracked and reported on derelict properties and signs of drug dealing and prostitution through walkabouts with the Eyes on Vanier Walking Club. Projects include: reclaiming concrete flowerboxes, garbage adoption program, improved street lighting, graffiti removal, community garden and the launch of the "who to call" campaign;
- Established a working relationship with Quartier Vanier Merchants' Association which supports activities such as the establishment of a Farmers' Market;
- Hosted meetings where residents can bring forward concerns and questions to resource people from different agencies through the Crime Prevention Committee (formerly Drugs and Prostitution Committee);
- Responsibility for this group has now been assumed by VCA's Health and Safety Committee;
- Established Together for Vanier bilingual website which includes portals for different groups, community resources, calendar, FAQs, archives of press releases and news section. The website is kept up to date by residents and a coordinator;

- Organized summertime Caravan sessions which involve outreach to communities throughout Vanier to listen to concerns and promote local resources and safety information, such as who to call, identifying problem addresses, community police, how to organize a street party, etc.);
- Organized Movies in the Park as part of an initiative to get more residents to use Richelieu Park in a positive way;
- Planned a “Say Hi” campaign where groups of volunteers, residents and community partners are invited to walk the streets of Vanier and simply say “hi.” This has been shown to encourage community connections, build solidarity among residents and create safe communities;
- Supported the formation of several street Neighbourhood Watches by identifying leaders;
- Created an “I love Vanier” mural as part of CPO’s “Paint It Up!” program to promote community beautification and to prevent illegal graffiti and tags;
- Supported residents and partners in organizing street and park parties; for example, Police Week, Fire Prevention Day, garage sales, community festivals, info kiosks, etc.;
- Facilitated workshops on youth gang prevention in high schools and presented workshops on security in the community in elementary schools and through the “Je décolle” program;
- Facilitated mediation between residents and community police to clarify expectations, limits and ways to better work together;
- Supervised volunteers who contributed to initiatives such as Katimavik, Tennessee youth, university and college students, etc.; and,
- Published a community calendar in partnership with 12 community organization and 3 political representatives for Ottawa-Vanier to connect different organizations in the community. Helped organize a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Conference to promote CPTED audits, discuss best practices and present the CPTED approach to residents and partners.

### **United Neighbours (UN)**

- Established a Project Advisory Committee that meets monthly and includes the following partners:
  - Councillor for Bay Ward; OCH House Coordinators; Neighbourhood Watch; Crime Stoppers; West End Chaplaincy; City of Ottawa, Protective Services; Youth Services Bureau; Severn Public School; Children’s Aid Society; Britannia Village Community Association; Regina Community & Recreation Association; Bayshore Shopping Centre, Property Coordinator; Rideauwood; Boys and Girls Club; Foster Farm Community Centre; Ottawa Police Services; community members; Minto Housing; CPO; Tim Hortons Owner/Carling &

Richmond; PQCHC Health Promoters & Youth Workers; NROCRC; Woodroffe High School; Shoreline Community Church; Ottawa Community Housing; Somali Fathers Association; Old Forge Community Resource Centre; Britannia Church; OC Transpo Security; Knights of Columbus; Rotary Club; CAWI; Pinecrest-Queensway Employment Services; and Pinecrest-Queensway ACTT Team.

- Participating businesses: Tim Hortons; Rexall Pharmacy; Ruby Hair Studio; Salang Kabob House; Tai Chi Association; Ceylonta; Istanbul Market ; R&V Specialty Foods; Shawarma Palace; Appletree Medical; Apple Auto Glass; Moes Touch; New Moon Tattoo; Fiore Apparel; Shoppers Drug Mart; Coliseum Ottawa Cinemas.
- Conducted community consultations in May 2008 to identify risk and protective factors. The session was attended by 90 people. Surveyed 840 residents. The survey was repeated in the summer of 2011 with 142 responses;
- Conducted review of literature, best practices and demographics.
- Established four working groups: Community Safety; Environment and Beautification; Drugs and Alcohol Prevention; and Outreach & Communications. They meet monthly and plan activities;
- Recruited and trained co-chairs for each working group;
- Established a website and communication strategy;
- Conducted Community Safety Coffee Houses in nine OCH communities to bring people together in a safe environment to discuss concerns and engage with partners, such as the OPS and OCH Security;
- Organized Finding Hope Together Forum, a public forum on holistic approaches to addictions and mental health issues. The event attracted 65 participants;
- Organized a “Make the Right Call” Forum on making the right call to OCH security, OPS, Bylaw, etc. Forty people attended the forum;
- Organized a Forum on Mental Health & Addictions that was held in Somali; 65 people attended;
- Organized a “Let’s Go Green” fair in Winthrop Court as part of the Environment & Beautification Working Group;
- Developed outreach materials in four languages; distribute materials to over 5,000 community residents annually, including door-to-door outreach;
- Increased information collection and dissemination to and from diverse language and ethnic groups;
- Developed the “Broken Teacup Society” arts group dedicated to creating artifacts to sell for the Winthrop Park development;

- Planned and filmed a mini-documentary to showcase Somali youth in the Michele Heights community to highlight their community's challenges and successes;
- Created and maintained community gardening initiatives in various neighbourhoods, including organic gardening workshops;
- Worked closely with Bay Ward Councillors Alex Cullen and Mark Taylor to beautify and make the area safer;
- Currently developing the park and play area at Winthrop Court;
- Developed a new play area, play structures and basketball court at Pinecrest Terrace in partnership with Kool Aid & Let Them be Kids;
- Conducted spring clean-ups and refurbished the Community House
- Distributed "Who To Call?" flyers and spoke to residents at 1,500 households in local social housing neighbourhoods in English, Arabic and Somali;
- Conducted a crime prevention information bag drop to over 240 units in Regina Towers; more than 30 people attended the tenant circle meeting on crime that week;
- Completed two youth engagement murals through the "Paint It Up!" program;
- Increased publicity efforts; the "Who to Call" postcard was featured in a full two-page spread of the 2009-2010 Old Forge Directory. CPO's logo and funding support of the UN project reached 18,000 households and businesses as a result of that years' distribution;
- Organized an "Open Mic, Free Your Hype" campaign to provide a way for youth to voice their perceptions and experience with racism;
- Addressed issues of safety in the community by providing increased support to youth who are at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity;
- Developed a series of Slam poetry workshops for United Sisters;
- Mentored and supervised three social work students and three internationally trained professionals through the project; and,
- Project Coordinator spoke at over 54 community meetings over four years including, but not limited to: universities, low income community associations, homeowner and private renter community associations, Coffee Houses, business engagement meetings, forums, Safe People Leaders group, youth groups, Pathways to Education, Canada Day celebrations, Bayshore Mosaic and Eid celebrations.

## Choosing Activities, Measuring Impact: The Theory of Change

Community-based initiatives to address issues as complex as crime prevention are challenging to plan, implement and evaluate. Some of the biggest challenges arise from the following:

- Lack of clarity among stakeholders on the main factors underlying the problem;
- Stakeholders may have very different assumptions about the nature of the problem and what can or should be done to address it. This becomes a problem if those assumptions are not discussed and resolved through the process of developing the program model;
- A focus on activities without a clear understanding of what these activities are intended to achieve; and,
- If the objectives of the activity are not clear, then it becomes very difficult to evaluate whether the activity was successful, or whether another activity would have been more effective.

These challenges can lead to fragmented action or lack of focus among the stakeholders working on an initiative. Worse, a lack of clarity can create a misleading impression of what the initiative has actually accomplished (or could reasonably accomplish) in the community. For example, there are a large number of factors that can contribute to crime in a community. Rising (or falling) trends in incidences of certain crimes may be related to factors far beyond the reach of a particular community initiative, such as the economic situation in a community. The specific factors that an initiative is trying to address should be clearly understood and measured so the initiative is not set up to fail by attempting to achieve outcomes it could not reasonably be expected to attain.

Developing a Theory of Change can be one useful strategy for addressing these issues. A Theory of Change is a representation that illustrates how a group views a specific issue, such as crime prevention:

- The main change(s) the group wishes to create; and,
- The “enabling factors” that the group believes need to be in place in order to create the change.

This is important because in attempting to address a complex issue such as crime prevention, initiatives are usually trying to address one or more of these enablers, rather than acting directly to prevent crime.

A Theory of Change is developed based on what a group knows and understands about an issue. This understanding can be based on factors such as current research about the issue and the experience of the group in working with the issue.

The community developers from the three community-based crime prevention initiatives came together to jointly develop a Theory of Change based on the experience of the projects to date. The Theory of Change was a useful way to “paint” a collective understanding of the prerequisites for their crime prevention initiatives and to help identify what each of the projects was trying to achieve. As with any Theory of Change, this understanding is based on a set of assumptions and is informed by experience. It is useful to revisit the Theory of Change at least annually to determine whether the experience and learnings from the initiative have led to new understandings about the nature of the problems and the proposed solutions.

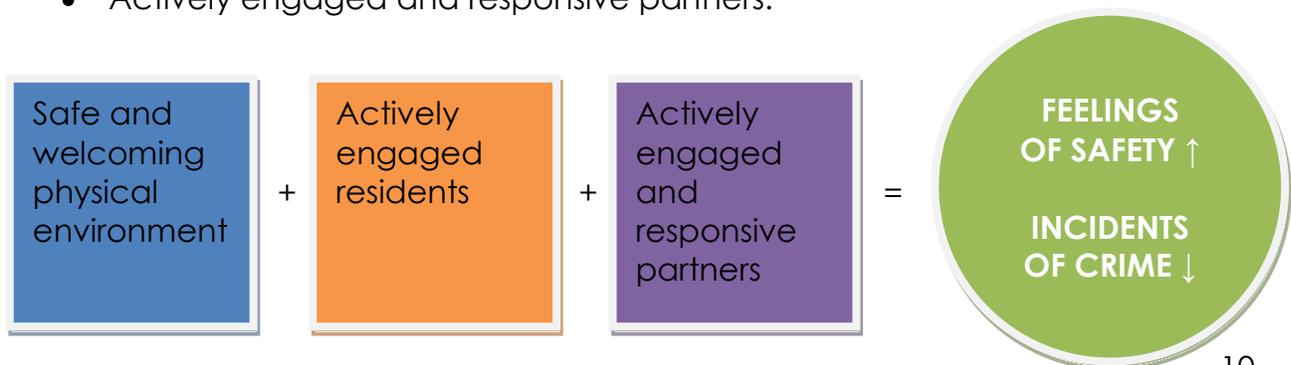
Within this shared framework, each project has chosen to focus on its own set of factors, and each employs a somewhat different set of strategies. This common framework makes it possible to start to compare different strategies that are focused on the same enabling factors. It also makes it possible to develop evaluation indicators that are related to the project based on the project's objectives.

The Theory of Change, illustrated below, starts with the two major changes that the projects are working to achieve:

- Increase feelings of safety (for residents); and,
- Decrease incidents of crime.

The community developers identified three predisposing conditions necessary to achieve these changes:

- Safe and welcoming physical and social environment;
- Actively engaged residents; and,
- Actively engaged and responsive partners.



The community developers went on to describe the factors that must be in place in order for those conditions to be achieved:

**1. Safe and welcoming physical and social environment:**

- a. Local residents make positive use of public space;
- b. No fear of gangs/unsafe situations;
- c. Respect for property;
- d. Space is CPTED-friendly; and,
- e. Local residents feel welcome in local facilities and spaces.

**2. Actively engaged residents:**

- a. Mechanisms to support resident engagement (e.g. tenant or resident associations) are in place and working well;
- b. Known and natural leaders in the community are identified, engaged and supported;
- c. New leaders are recruited, engaged, developed and supported;
- d. Residents have the desire, knowledge and skills for community engagement:
  - i. Residents know about and feel connected to local activities;
  - ii. Residents feel a sense of belonging and ownership;
  - iii. Residents are willing to get involved; and,
  - iv. Residents feel they have a voice in decisions.
- e. There are effective coalitions between residents and partners;
- f. There is a balanced/positive image of the community; and,
- g. Residents are linked effectively to support services, opportunities and resources.

**3. Actively engaged and responsive partners:**

- a. Police are engaged and responsive;
- b. There are safe opportunities to report crime and other concerns;
- c. There is positive engagement by businesses and politicians;
- d. There are effective coalitions between residents and partners;
- e. There is a balanced and positive image of the community; and,
- f. Residents are linked effectively to support services, opportunities and resources.

Each of the projects and activities in the three community initiatives is attempting to address one or more of the factors listed in the diagram above. For planning and evaluation purposes, it is very useful to clearly identify the intended outcomes. This makes it possible to reflect on whether the activity achieved the desired outcome.

The tables below list the main community initiatives in the three communities according to the main factors that they intend to address in the Theory of Change diagram. UN refers to United Neighbours (Pinecrest-Queensway); LOH refers to Lowertown, Our Home; and T4V refers to Together for Vanier.

SAFE AND WELCOMING PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		UN	LOH	T4V
Local residents make positive use of public space	Community gatherings, parties, celebrations in parks	✓	✓	✓
	Movies in the Park		✓	✓
	Community gardens	✓	✓	✓
	Development of parks, play areas, basketball courts, etc.	✓	✓	✓
	Public art or murals	✓	✓	✓
Respect for property	Community clean-ups	✓	✓	✓
Space is CPTED-friendly (crime prevention through environmental design)	Safety audits, walkabouts, walking clubs	✓	✓	✓

ACTIVELY ENGAGED RESIDENTS		UN	LOH	T4V
Mechanisms to support engagement are in place and working well	Establishment of residents' committees/ community associations	✓	✓	✓
	Support to tenants' associations	✓	✓	✓
New leaders are recruited, engaged, developed and supported	Youth Leadership development	✓	✓	
	Youth arts component (e.g. music, slam poetry, visual art)	✓	✓	

Residents have desire, knowledge and skills for engagement	Community surveys and forums	✓	✓	✓
	Events to help residents connect with each other	✓	✓	✓
	Communications and outreach strategies developed to reach specific groups in each community	✓	✓	✓
	Website developed	✓		✓
	Forums/info meetings on subjects of special interest (e.g. addictions and mental health)	✓	✓	✓

ACTIVELY ENGAGED AND RESPONSIVE PARTNERS		UN	LOH	T4V
Police and other safety services are engaged and responsive	Outreach and info sessions by Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) Safety Services, Ottawa Police Service (OPS)	✓	✓	✓
Safe opportunities to report crime and concerns	Outreach and info sessions by OCH Safety Services, OPS	✓	✓	✓
	Campaign to encourage reporting to authorities	✓	✓	✓
	Support formation of Neighbourhood Watches	✓	✓	✓
	Community Safety Coffee Houses	✓		
Positive engagement by business and politicians	Support and engagement of City Councillors	✓	✓	✓
	Participation of local business association	✓		✓

ACTIVELY ENGAGED RESIDENTS <u>AND</u> ACTIVELY ENGAGED AND RESPONSIVE PARTNERS		UN	LOH	T4V
Residents linked effectively to support services, opportunities and resources	Community health or resource centre staff help connect residents to other programs and resources, as necessary	✓	✓	✓
Balanced/positive image of community	Tracking and responding to unfairly negative media coverage; writing positive news stories	✓	✓	✓
Effective coalitions between residents and partners	Establishment of Steering Committees of residents and key partner organizations	✓	✓	✓

Performance indicators and data collection strategies have been developed for some of the enablers/prerequisites<sup>2</sup> that are more common to the three community-based crime prevention initiatives:

- Local residents make positive use of public space;
- Local residents are actively engaged; and
- There are safe opportunities to report crime and concerns.

Each of the enablers/prerequisites is described, indicators are identified, and potential data collection strategies are suggested. These indicators and data collection strategies were developed, as much as possible, to follow the criteria described above. They are intended to provide meaningful information on the extent to which the desired objectives of the initiatives are actually being attained – if there has been measurable progress towards the objectives, then the activities being undertaken are likely appropriate; if there has been no progress, then alternative activities should be considered.

For each of the indicators it is important to collect data to establish a baseline, set a goal for the desired change, and then to repeat the data collection at a later point to determine if there has been any change. The data collection intervals depend on the nature of the project; ideally, the baseline data is collected before an intervention takes place and data is collected again at regular intervals (at least yearly) to assess progress, but the frequency will depend on what makes sense in terms of the intervention.

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<sup>2</sup> Identified in the Theory of Change

Enabler/ Prerequisite	Description	Indicators	Data Collection Strategies
<b>Local residents make positive use of public space</b>	<p>This enabler relates directly to residents' perception of safety in the space concerned. It is a more direct measure than an opinion survey because it captures behaviour. This objective would be relevant to activities such as Movies in the Park and some of the neighbourhood parties and gatherings.</p> <p>Evaluation questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has there been an increase in positive use of the public space since the intervention?</li> <li>• Have the number and severity of negative incidents decreased?</li> </ul> <p>If there is no positive change in these indicators, it might be a sign that the activities need to be reconsidered, or the understanding of how to support more positive use of public space should be reviewed.</p>	<p>Number and profile of people using the space. Document the numbers and types of people (e.g. youth, seniors, parents with children) to get a "snapshot" of who is using the park at different times of the day.</p>	<p>Observe and document the use of the space at different times of the day over a one-week period before the start of the intervention. Identify the types of people using the park and how they are using the park.</p> <p>Survey or interview residents living near the space to determine if/when they use the space; if they don't use it, why not?</p>
		<p>Number and type of negative incidents in the public space (e.g. garbage, graffiti) and how quickly they are resolved.</p>	<p>Ask a group of neighbours to document the number and types of negative incidents in the space and how they are resolved.</p> <p>Supplement the above with photos.</p>
<b>Local residents are actively engaged</b>	<p>Although there can be many levels and types of "engagement," probably the most significant indicator of the viability of a community-based initiative relates to active participation on the organizing committees and working groups. Many initiatives are led by a smaller core group of people, with others joining from time to time, so it is useful to focus on the engagement of the core group.</p> <p>Evaluation questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a solid core of community members who participate actively? Is participation decreasing? Holding steady? Increasing?</li> <li>• Does the composition of this core group reflect the key groups living in the community (e.g. new Canadians, people living on low incomes)?</li> <li>• Does this group feel engaged in the initiative? Do participants feel like they have a voice?</li> </ul> <p>Ultimately, it is important that the core group members are "doers" who are prepared to get involved and make things</p>	<p>Socio-economic profile of the core group, compared with the community. Some potential categories that might be significant include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Seniors</li> <li>• Low income</li> <li>• New Canadians</li> </ul>	<p>Have core group discuss which groups in the community have not been participating on core group; set a goal for increasing participation.</p> <p>Develop objectives for increasing the engagement of particular groups and strategies for achieving objectives (e.g. increase outreach to new Canadians)</p> <p>Assess progress on achievement of objectives at least yearly.</p>
		<p>Participation rates at meetings.</p>	<p>Track participation rate of existing members.</p> <p>Identify trends in participation.</p>
		<p>Group members feel they can participate fully</p>	<p>Yearly "check-in" with members on their satisfaction with how well the group is</p>

Enabler/ Prerequisite	Description	Indicators	Data Collection Strategies
	<p>happen, rather than chosen because they supposedly "represent" a certain part of the community. But if this group is leaving out important parts of the community, it is worth posing the question of whether there needs to be greater outreach, or whether there are other factors that exclude these groups or make them feel unwelcome.</p>	<p>in discussions, they are being "heard" and they are able to resolve conflicts effectively.</p>	<p>working and how satisfied they are with their own participation. Develop strategies to address participation issues.</p>
<p><b>Safe opportunities to report crime and concerns</b></p>	<p>Many of the efforts to encourage residents to report crimes or concerns are based on the belief that if the residents have the correct information on who to call, they will report. Actually, the decision to report a crime or a concern to police or to any other authorities is influenced by several factors. It is important to know what the real problem is in order to develop an appropriate strategy.</p> <p>Evaluation questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do residents know how they should report their concerns and to whom?</li> <li>• Do residents feel they can report in confidence and without fear of retribution?</li> <li>• Do residents feel their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon?</li> </ul>	<p>Residents have adequate knowledge of their reporting options and the reporting process: what to report, to whom and how.</p>	<p>Use surveys or focus groups. Give residents typical scenarios that might arise for different concerns and ask who they would contact for help.</p>
		<p>Residents feel comfortable reporting their concerns (including crime) to local authorities.</p>	<p>Use surveys or focus groups to assess residents' likelihood of reporting crimes and concerns. If resident reports s/he is unlikely to report, it is important to determine the reason why. These surveys are particularly important in groups that experience more frequent victimization.</p>
		<p>Residents are satisfied with the responsiveness and quality of service from local authorities.</p>	<p>Use surveys or focus groups to determine resident satisfaction with responsiveness and quality of service from police and other relevant authorities. It is important to distinguish between responses from residents who have actually made calls (and so are answering based on experience) from those who have not.</p>

## **Community Stories**

### ***Lowertown, Our Home***

#### **Youth Leadership Project Case Study**

From Lowertown, you can easily see the Peace Tower and green rooftops of the Parliament Buildings, but for the teens who live there, it might as well be another world—one where it is difficult to find your way out. Akuol and Dino are two teens who have grown up in Lowertown. In many ways, they are typical of other young people in the neighbourhood—coming from immigrant families and living in Ottawa Community Housing. What sets them apart is that they now feel they have choices and opportunities thanks to an innovative Youth Leadership Program.

#### *Lowertown – A Community in Transition*

Lowertown is a small, historic community. Home to about 8,000 people, Lowertown was, for many years, predominantly a Francophone, working class neighbourhood. You can still see some of the workers' row houses that date back more than a century, as well as some of the beautiful parks that were created at the same time. You can also see a mix of social housing ranging from row housing to apartment buildings—one of the largest concentrations in the city.

This is a neighbourhood in transition. Perhaps no single place reflects this transition more than York Street Public School, the only public school in the neighbourhood. The diversity of faces and names reflects the fact that one Lowertown resident in four is now a visible minority. This has become a community of immigrants, with half of the population having come to Canada between 1996 and 2006, and 28% having arrived between 2001 and 2006. These new Canadians have come from around the world, with roughly one-third coming from Asia or the Middle East, one-third from Africa, and the rest from Europe (26%), the Caribbean (7%), Latin America (6%) and the United States (3%).

Lowertown is also a neighbourhood where many families are dealing with the impact of poverty; about 40% of residents live on incomes below Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Off (compared to only 17% for the City of Ottawa) and over one in four residents lives in single-parent households (compared to 16% for the City of Ottawa).

### *Lowertown, Our Home*

A collaborative, community-based approach to crime prevention in Lowertown got its start in 2007 with the formation of LESCO (Lowertown East Security Committee of Ottawa). LESCO was a joint initiative of CPO the Lowertown Community Resource Centre (LCRC), the OPS, OCH, the City Councillor and a number of community leaders. For the first time, LESCO provided a forum for the OPS, community agencies and residents to take an integrated, holistic approach to community building and addressing issues of concern. LESCO changed its name to *Lowertown, Our Home/Basse-Ville, notre chez-nous* (LOH) in 2008.

The mission of LOH is to engage community members in identifying common concerns, community solutions and preventative measures to build a safe and healthy community. Much of the initial work of LOH focused on addressing safety and security issues such as drugs, prostitution and violence. But the work also encompassed positive approaches such as community building, beautification and other strategies, including working with youth.

### *Launching the Youth Leadership Project*

Life is challenging for teens in Lowertown. Many teens, especially those from visible minorities, feel they are unfairly targeted by security and law enforcement officers and are generally stigmatized in the community. At the same time, they say there are few opportunities for teens from the neighbourhood to engage in positive activities outside of school. Local teenagers Akuol and Dino report that many teens spend their spare time playing basketball or hanging out, making them prime candidates for joining a gang.

The Youth Leadership project was developed to address many of these issues. OPS Inspector Uday Jaswal made the LOH partnership aware of an opportunity to apply for funding from the Ministry of Correctional Services to get a Youth Leadership project off the ground. Over the long term, the hope was that such a project would contribute to lowering the number of incidents of crime and decreasing the number of youth joining gangs. The LOH partners hoped that this project might improve the relationship between young people and those responsible for security and enforcement in the neighbourhood (police officers and security personnel from Ottawa Community Housing). They wanted to try to challenge the negative stereotypes that existed on both sides.

The idea that emerged was that a group of youth who were identified as “potential leaders” would be invited to take part in the program. The group would participate in a variety of activities over the school year: arts, recreation and educational/skills building opportunities. The programming would be designed to give participants an opportunity to learn some important group skills, find out about potential educational and career possibilities, develop relationships with other participants and the leaders, and have fun. Participants who successfully completed the program would receive a laptop.

For Akuol and Dino, who were in grades 10 and 11 when the program started, what initially appealed about the program was the chance to get out of the neighbourhood and try a few new activities. They were also excited about the opportunity to get to know new people and not have to hang out with the groups in the neighbourhood. They were a part of a group of 20 that began meeting once every two weeks. They met in the Youth Centre, a large, bright room in one of the OCH buildings with some chairs and couches, a pool table and a fussball table. Together, the group established some ground rules for their time together—respect was a big one—and started to talk about what they wanted to do. This experience helped the participants to feel listened to, and to develop some ownership over the program.

Through a partnership with the One World Awesome Arts program, the youth were able to express themselves through activities such as slam poetry and theatre. The arts work resulted in a performance at the first Lowertown Awesome Arts Festival in May 2011 that portrayed different situations in high school relating to issues such as homophobia and sexism. The participants also developed media productions on subjects like global warming and racism. The recreation opportunities included field trips to see basketball games, go tubing and try rock climbing, among others. The youth also had a chance to develop skills in some key areas such as cross-cultural communications and conflict resolution. Another important part of the educational experience was the chance to visit places like the main police station to learn more about the role of police officers and Algonquin College to learn about potential careers in law enforcement.

The outings gave the youth a chance to challenge themselves in a safe setting. Dino remembers not really wanting to do the rock climbing initially, but with everyone motivating him, he was able to face his fears and do what he thought he couldn't do. Akuol's biggest fear at the beginning was not fitting in with the group. She thought it would be difficult to get along with people that she didn't feel she had much in common with, and some of whom she had had problems with in the past.

One of the pivotal points in the program was the relationship between the youth and the security staff. Many of the youth were really uncertain what to expect when they heard that an Ottawa Police officer and a security person from OCH would also be participating. "I had seen some brutal attacks where security personnel had misused their power," said Dino. "So when they started showing up, I wasn't sure I wanted to stay in the program." Akuol had a different idea since her father had been a police officer in her home country in Africa. But she, too, had seen kids being arrested in the neighbourhood and so she tended to keep her distance from them.

The officers were also unsure about how they would be received by the youth. Ray Tucker-Peel is the Community Safety Officer for OCH in Lowertown and Vanier. Much of his job involves patrolling buildings, engaging tenants, and responding to a wide variety of complaints. Some of the issues he sees in Lowertown relate to incidents such as graffiti, young people smoking up or hanging out, and gangs trying to recruit new members. He looked forward to the opportunity to get involved with the Youth Leadership Program because it was already a strong interest of his, and a chance to do something positive with the youth. He started to spend time at the Youth Centre on a regular basis, often playing football or futsal with the youth.

Ryan Pierce is the Community Police Centre Officer for Lowertown. He came to the program after it had started, replacing another officer who had been transferred. He was no stranger to working with youth, having run a youth employment program for the last two summers and having worked in the schools. When he arrived, however, there was some apprehension among the youth as they were asking, "How long will Ryan be staying?" Their concerns diminished as he made a concentrated effort to get to know the youth, coming to the Youth Centre a couple of times a week to spend time, usually out of uniform.

The highlights of the program, for both participants and leaders, were the two weekend retreats. The retreats included all of the participants as well as youth workers from LCRC and OCH, along with OPS partners. An initial retreat held in the fall at the Y camp was an important opportunity for participants to start to get to know each other and the leaders. They played a variety of trust games to "break the ice." Dino felt he really started to get to know people when they had the chance to talk together in their cabins and while they were out canoeing and fishing.

The camping trip to Christie Lake, at the end of the program in June, helped to move many of the relationships to another level. Akuol's biggest surprise of the whole Leadership Program came during the sharing around the campfire. Many of the young people were carrying heavy responsibilities – some were the major income earners for their families; many were responsible for looking after younger siblings; and some were looking after parents who weren't able to carry out their responsibilities because of drug or alcohol problems or mental illness. It made her realize that she was not the only one who was experiencing some of these issues, and made her want to share as well. Over that evening, the participants and the leaders learned that they had much more in common with each other than they had thought.

Another important part of the Christie Lake experience was a discussion led by Ray and Ryan on the role of women. They had noticed during the program that there were a number of occasions where the male participants were not respecting the female participants or leaders. A lot of the youth came from cultures with very fixed ideas about the role of women. The discussion provided an opportunity to challenge some of these ideas with the male participants in a relaxed, open setting. The discussion built trust and rapport between them and was very positive.

### *The Impact of the Initiative*

Both the leaders and the participants considered the Youth Leadership Program to be a big success. A total of 17 out of the 20 youth completed the program; several have volunteered to be senior leaders for the upcoming year and have been actively talking up the program with other youth. The partner organizations all agreed that the program should continue, even though there was not additional funding for the program at this time. LCRC will incorporate this program into its youth programming for this year, and will continue to look for opportunities to expand it. OCH and OPS have both committed to support the continued involvement of their staff in the program.

What is the impact of an experience like the Leadership Program? Both Akuol and Dino said that the program had opened doors for them, giving them a sense of new possibilities and opportunities – both in terms of careers as well as socially – and a chance to look beyond their neighbourhood. It also helped them to be more open with each other. Akuol says that when she's in a situation where she feels she needs to be more mature, she thinks about what she learned in the program about what it means to be a leader. Both are keen to put their new skills to work, and they have volunteered to be senior leaders with the program and to lead activities with other youth at their schools. According to LCRC youth worker Amaris Rimay, "We have helped to create a sense of family and a group that really feels they can work together now."

The youth report that the relationships they formed with Ray and Ryan have had other impacts as well. Akuol is thinking about a potential career in law enforcement and has had the opportunity to work for CPO over the summer. Dino has been taking the opportunity to get to know the police officers and security guards in the neighbourhood, and to help out if he can. He recently made a call to OCH to report finding some needles in the community. According to Ryan, "The young people are now starting to think positively about their own community and are prepared to start giving something back."

The leaders are very enthusiastic about the program. They noticed changes in the kids – that they gradually became less apprehensive and more open and relaxed around each other and with the leaders. It was even possible to see a change in the dynamic in the neighbourhood between the youth and the security staff. One of the OCH security officers attended a basketball game at Algonquin College with some of the participants, and one of them said "hi" to him. One of the youth's friends, who had not been part of the program, challenged him, saying he should not be talking to the security officer. The participant came back to his friend and said, "Hey, he's OK. You should get to know these guys."

Ray said the Leadership Program offered a chance to bring a different focus to his work. "I enjoyed this as a positive, proactive activity that is so different from the negative, complaints-based part of my job." He was very impressed with how positive the young people are, especially with all of the responsibilities they are managing. He and Ryan enjoyed helping the youth to understand more about what their jobs were all about, and were excited to see that some of them are now considering some aspect of law enforcement as a potential career. Ray has taken some of his colleagues to the Youth Centre to shoot pool with the youth and they have been surprised at how happy, upbeat and articulate they were. They were starting to rethink some of the stereotypes they had about the young people.

### *Lessons Learned*

The success of this program can be boiled down to one key factor – relationships. Both the teens and the leaders speak with a great deal of feeling about the relationships that were created – how the youth realized they shared much more in common than they had ever realized, and how the youth now saw the leaders, including the OCH and OPS officers, as friends and mentors. The key factors that contributed to the development of this relationship were the personalities of the leaders (their genuine interest in the youth, their openness and willingness to participate) and the time the leaders were able to spend with the youth.

While the relationships began to develop at the twice-monthly sessions, they were cemented during the two weekend retreats. Both the leaders and the participants commented on how important it was to be able to spend an extended time together, having the chance to hang out with each other, play games, go canoeing, talk around the campfire, and stay overnight with them. It was during these trips that the young people and the leaders really got to know each other as persons and started to develop some trust. Although there are many programs for youth in different communities across the city, Ray and Ryan both felt that what made this program stand out were the retreats; it would not have been possible to develop these deep relationships any other way.

This kind of program requires a high level of commitment and support from the partner organizations, and a significant commitment of staff time. LCRC played a very important role in terms of program coordination, as well as bringing the skills of their youth workers. The OPS and OCH each committed significant time to the project, enabling key staff to attend the bi-weekly sessions with participants, as well as the two retreats. All staff who were involved as leaders brought a genuine interest and passion to their work with youth. The three partner organizations were so thrilled with the outcome of the program that they have all committed to continue their participation, even without additional external funding for this year.

One of the challenges in this program was dealing with the reality of life for the participants. Erica Nickels, the former LCRC staff person who was responsible for the Youth Leadership Program commented, "Because of the heavy level of responsibility and changing situations that the youth were experiencing, some were unable to participate consistently in the program because of unanticipated situations. The program had to be flexible enough to allow for these situations, and the youth workers had to be able to provide support to the participants for situations that might be happening outside of the program."

Another learning experience was the need to adapt the program expectations to where the youth were coming from. While Erica had originally expected this to be more of a program focused on developing leadership skills, she soon realized that the expectations of the program had to be adjusted. In this case, it meant that time needed to be spent dealing with some behaviour issues, as well as homophobia and sexism. But she felt the program was that much more successful because it was able to meet the kids where they were coming from, instead of having unrealistic expectations. "At the beginning, the most important thing is that the kids are just showing up to the program. You need to take the time to get to know the kids and develop the trusting relationships with them. This needs to be seen as a long-term proposition. If you build the

relationship and skills with the kids in year 1, then by years 2 and 3, they can start moving into leadership roles,” said Erica.

Finally, while the laptop was certainly seen by the youth as an attractive incentive to participate, the presence of such a valuable incentive introduced other problems. Some of the participants became obsessed with the amount of participation they actually needed to complete in order to qualify for the laptop. In the end, it was felt that if the program continued, the laptop was not required.

### *Advice to Others*

Erica had this advice for other communities considering similar programs:

- Start small; don't try to take in a huge number of youth at the start.
- Keep expectations modest; start where the kids are. Think of this as a long-term proposition.
- Before even writing a proposal, bring together a group of young people and their parents to find out what they want.
- Try to engage the parents so they understand the program and support it. This takes time and might involve a home visit, but that support is important. It also makes it easier to go back to the parents if issues come up during the program, or if you notice that someone is not participating.
- Take time to develop the relationship with the partners to secure their commitment. Make sure they are willing to commit their staff for the time it takes, including the retreats.
- Get the right leaders who have the commitment, energy and enthusiasm to work with the youth.
- Approach the high schools the kids attend to determine if it would be possible for them to get a credit for their participation in the program.
- If you can't do this type of program properly, don't do it. It is too much of a risk to build up the hopes of the youth and then dash them if people are not prepared to follow through on their commitments.

### *Summing up the Program*

Perhaps the impact of the Youth Leadership Program can be best summed up in the future aspirations of two of the participants. Akuol says her dream is “to help kids to have positive relationships with each other.” As for Dino? “I really want to motivate people to do the impossible – the stuff they didn't think they could do. That's what this program has done for me.”

## ***Together for Vanier***

### **Movies in the Park Case Study**

Vanier is a community that has suffered from a bad reputation for some time. The community became known as a centre for prostitution and drug dealing; conditions in parks and streets deteriorated. Despite this, residents and community associations continued to look for ways to get people together to address local concerns.

The first challenge in community building, and often one of the most difficult, is finding a way to get people out of their homes and to meet one another. Serge Poirier, who runs the Poutine Shack in Vanier, had an idea. He was talking with Mehdi Louzouaz, the Liaison Officer for Crime Prevention Vanier, about possible activities for a street party. Serge had heard about the idea of showing movies outdoors and thought it would be a fun, inexpensive activity to bring families out on a summer evening.

Mehdi began checking the idea with local residents and partners and found there was a lot of interest and enthusiasm. They decided to try it out in Richelieu Park, a historic park on the northern edge of Vanier that was not being used much by local residents because of drug abuse and prostitution activity.

### *Vanier – A Profile of the Community*

Historically a working class, predominantly Francophone community nestled among the surrounding neighbourhoods of Rockcliffe Park and New Edinburgh, Vanier has always maintained a strong sense of its own identity. Vanier was formerly a village, then a separate city, before being amalgamated with the City of Ottawa.

Vanier North includes the part of the former City of Vanier that lies north of Montreal Road and takes in Richelieu Park. This neighbourhood is home to approximately 8,000 residents. The character of the neighbourhood is changing<sup>3</sup>; there are relatively few unilingual Francophone households now (approximately 4%) and a very high proportion of bilingual residents (58%). About one person in five is a recent immigrant (45% from Europe; 21% from Asia or the Middle East; 12% from the Caribbean; 11% from Latin America; 4% from Africa; and 2% from the United States). About 5% of the population is Aboriginal, a much higher proportion than the City of Ottawa.

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study profile of Vanier North, based on Statistics Canada data [www.neighbourhoodstudy.ca/profiles/index.php?page=Vanier\\_North](http://www.neighbourhoodstudy.ca/profiles/index.php?page=Vanier_North)

The area faces some significant challenges. Poverty is twice as prevalent here as in the City of Ottawa as a whole (28% of Vanier North residents live below the Low Income Cut-Off, compared to 14% for the City of Ottawa). Almost one family in three is headed by a single parent (double the rate for the City of Ottawa), and almost one in three seniors is living alone.

A walk through Vanier North takes you past many older, low-rise apartments. About 65% of people here are renters. Vanier North is also a community on the move; more than one in five people have moved in the last year, which is a significant challenge for community-building.

### *Together for Vanier*

Crime prevention activities in Vanier coalesced and developed a solid base through the initiative that became known as Together for Vanier. Together for Vanier got its start in 2006 when CPO approached Councillor Georges Bédard and the Vanier Community Service Centre, offering to support a community-led process to address crime and safety issues. At an initial meeting, which included representatives from organizations across the neighbourhood, participants were enthusiastic about the prospect and decided to proceed.

The first step was a community survey, conducted in spring 2007. This was followed by a community meeting attended by over 100 people where the survey results were presented and people had a chance to talk. It became apparent that local residents were very interested in coming together in a safe place to talk about their concerns and wanted to find a way to address them.

Together for Vanier formed a Steering Committee to guide the process and two working groups to address the priorities that emerged from the community meeting – beautification and drugs and prostitution. The working groups provided a stable base for the involvement of residents and partner organizations that would support the development of many initiatives, including Movies in the Park.

### *“Take Back the Park!”*

Richelieu Park is the green, forested “heart” of Vanier. Lying at the north end of the community, across from Beechwood Cemetery, it was once home to the White Fathers religious order, but was taken over by the City of Vanier to become a municipal park in the mid-1970s. The former City Hall was located here; it is now home to the Richelieu-Vanier Community Centre. It is also the site of the Maple Sugar Fest – a unique end-of-winter community celebration that has been organized annually by Action Vanier, a local community group.

According to H el ene Berthelet, the park was not used very much by local residents a few years ago. About one-third of the 10 acre park is wooded with limited lighting, which provided cover for activities such as drug dealing and prostitution. As a result, many residents, particularly families with children and seniors, did not feel comfortable using the park.

H el ene has been in a unique position to observe how the park has been used. She works for the City of Ottawa as the Recreation Supervisor for the Richelieu-Vanier and Rockliffe Park Community Centres. She heard from many residents who were concerned about not being able to use this incredible space in the heart of the community, and was a strong advocate and supporter for local residents who wanted to "take back their park."

### *Bringing Movies to the Park*

Mehdi began to meet with local residents and partners to discuss how Movies in the Park could be a way to help residents to meet one another and to get more of them using Richelieu Park with their families. The vision that emerged was a series of fun, free events on several evenings throughout the summer – movies, a barbecue, activities for the children, and a chance to find out about what was happening in the community.

Richelieu Park was an ideal location for the movies. There was a source of power, easy access to washrooms, and a place for people to seek shelter if it rained. H el ene from the City was very supportive of the project and keen to make the Richelieu-Vanier Community Centre available.

Mehdi pulled together a small committee of volunteers to organize the work. Initially, the committee consisted mainly of residents and the Together for Vanier Beautification group, but later included key partners: the Richelieu-Vanier Community Centre, Action Vanier, the Club Optimiste and the SAW Gallery. Many of the initial challenges were logistical. They had to find out where they could get the equipment they needed to screen the movies. They also needed technical help. They found out they could get all of this by becoming non-profit members of SAW Video. They hired a projectionist and trained a group of youth to do set-up and take-down.

They were able to borrow a barbecue from the Club Optimiste for a community barbecue before the film, as well as a popcorn maker (because what's a movie without popcorn!). They hired local youth to organize programming for the children, and found community volunteers to staff the event.

The organizers needed to let the community know about the event and make sure they could attend. The community newspaper publicized the event and volunteers dropped flyers door-to-door. Together for Vanier organized a parade to draw residents to the first movie in the summer of 2009. They wanted to make sure people from Vanier had a safe and easy way to get to the park for the movies, so for the first year, they rented a bus and recruited an off-duty volunteer OC Transpo driver to shuttle residents to and from the park.

The partners involved in Movies in the Park debated about how they could use these events to present useful information to local residents in attendance. In the end, they decided on a low-key, fun approach. At each event, there were a couple of tables with information on key services, such as the Food Bank. The main way of providing information was informal. Organizers and key partners wore special T-shirts and circulated through the crowd before the movie during the barbecue. This provided a great opportunity to connect residents with the various activities happening in the community – programs and services for children, the community garden, the beautification project, etc. A few key partners, such as Marc Daviault, the Community Police Centre Officer, were invited to attend so they could also circulate informally.

### *The Impact of the Initiative*

Movies in the Park was a definite success in terms of participation – all residents had to bring was a folding chair and some bug spray. The first couple of events attracted close to 400 people and generated a significant “buzz” in the community. Attendance tapered off later to an average of 200-300 people per movie, but even on the rainy nights, 90-150 people came out. Other communities became interested in the idea, with Lowertown joining in the second year, and Eastern Ottawa in the third.

Hélène has noticed some significant changes in how the park is being used since the start of Movies in the Park. “Before, we used to get prostitutes coming to the park at all hours of the day. Now there are many fewer incidents of prostitution, usually occurring only at night. We also used to find lots of condoms in the park, but not now.” She has noticed that local residents are feeling much more ownership over the park. “You see many families coming and more dog walkers. If people do see something happening, they are much more inclined to report it.”

For Marc Daviault, Movies in the Park has been an ideal opportunity to get to know some of the local kids and parents in a fun setting. He has noticed that even the kids are feeling more ownership over the park. Kids say to him, "Hey, that's where we go to see our movies!" when they talk about Richelieu Park.

The success of Movies in the Park has spawned other popular events: Music Under the Stars, a Canvas in Colour event, the Fête de la St. Jean, an outdoor ice rink, and ultimate frisbee games. These events have also helped draw people to participate in programs offered by the recreation centre, like the *Viens jouer dehors* program.

Rose Anne Leonard provides a resident's perspective on the impact of Movies in the Park. She is a member of the Vanier Community Association (VCA) board and has been involved in a wide range of community activities. She heard about Movies in the Park and volunteered to sit at a table to give out tickets for hot dogs and talk about what was happening at the VCA. She's a firm advocate for the importance of getting people involved in activities that bring them together. "I believe in facilitating connections between people in a non-artificial way, helping people to get involved in activities that are meaningful and fun." She loves the outdoors, the uncontrolled fun atmosphere at Movies in the Park, and the way members from across the community participate. Rose Anne says these events help build community in two ways – first, by helping people to see who else lives here, and second, by helping people see how they can get engaged in their community. "It's not just about getting bums in seats. It's about using this as a way to get people involved in other things." The connections made through Movies in the Park have helped local residents get involved in other activities such as the community garden and beautification initiatives.

Rose Anne also believes the crime prevention component of these events is important. "Having the Community Police Centre Officer attend is very important as people are still concerned with crime in Vanier. This gives people a chance to connect with the police in an informal way."

Hélène sums up the impact of Movies in the Park, "People here are very proud of their centre and their park. There is no graffiti, no vandalism, and they love coming here." The organizers are now considering how they might bring this successful model to other parks in Vanier.

## *Lessons Learned*

One of the most valuable outcomes was learning how to strike a balance between Movies in the Park being a program delivered to the community versus one that is run by the community. Vanier CSC (and the Community Resource Centres in the other communities) took on the core organizational responsibilities. However, there was a strong commitment to supporting local communities in taking ownership over these events, so there was substantial involvement of local volunteers on the organizing committee as well as at the events themselves.

Each Movies in the Park event was a huge amount of work to put on, especially in the first year. The main challenges were arranging advertising, transport, security and logistics. In the first year, almost all the equipment was borrowed or rented and had to be picked up prior to every event and then returned. This problem was lessened in subsequent years as other communities joined in, which spread the organizational workload. As well, the City of Ottawa provided a \$19,000 grant that made it possible to buy equipment (projector, screen, popcorn maker), to be shared by the participating centres. The organizers also determined by that time that they really did not require the bus to transport residents to and from the movies.

Even deciding which movies would be screened and obtaining the rights to show the movies was a learning process. The committee of residents chose the movies, which prompted some good discussions. Obtaining the rights to show each film was a time-consuming process. Some movies could be shown free, some could not be shown at all, whereas others required payments ranging from \$100 - \$400/movie. The initial budget for a summer of Movies in the Park was \$5,000 (for food, equipment rental and rights), but the budget has now been lowered to \$3,000 - \$4,000 since they have their own equipment.

### *Advice to Other Communities:*

Mehdi Louzouaz offers the following advice to other communities that might be interested in their own version of Movies in the Park:

- Get local residents involved early so they really feel it is their event.
- Secure an appropriate location. Consider access to power, washrooms, and shelter in case of inclement weather.
- Consider the purpose of the event and the kind of atmosphere you want to create. Is it an event where you want to present information? Do you want people to have fun?
- Secure the necessary equipment and technical support.

- Get good people in charge of logistics, promotion, and the technical side of running the movies.
- Keep the expectations reasonable – don't try to do more than two or three events in a season.
- Know your community. In Vanier, movies for children and animated films seem to attract the biggest crowds.
- Consider how the movies might fit with other celebrations or events in the community. You could join them with another activity, but would that make the day too long, especially for children?
- This is a great opportunity to do outreach to a wide group of people in the community. The most effective way they have found is to recruit a solid team of resident volunteers who are very comfortable engaging people in the crowd, telling people about events, and inviting them to participate.
- This also provides an excellent excuse to do door-to-door outreach to homes with children prior to the event.
- Collaboration between community resource centres has made the organization of these events much easier. The centres share some of the overall organizational tasks and responsibilities (e.g. hiring a technical team and producing marketing materials), and a local residents' committee in each area does the local organization and outreach.
- Getting support from a key partner organizations, for example, the City of Ottawa through the Richelieu-Vanier Community Centre, has been crucial to taking care of "behind the scenes" details such as location and infrastructure to make these events successful.
- Consider different feedback mechanisms such as surveys or a post-mortem meeting.

## ***United Neighbours***

### **Community Safety Coffee Houses Case Study**

Carol Smith has seen a lot during her time living at Regina Towers, a highrise near Richmond Road and Carling Avenue in the Pinecrest-Queensway area of Ottawa. She says many of the problems started to arise when the building was converted from a seniors building to one accepting all ages. At one point, she says, the building became known for having the "best drugs in town," and attracted customers from all over. She says there has been a string of robberies in the building, many of them drug-related.

Moe Charlebois is Vice-President of the Community Association at Britannia Village and has a long history of community involvement. He, too, speaks passionately about the need to take action to address some of the issues affecting the safety of communities in the West End – robberies, drugs, and the growth of youth gangs.

Both Moe and Carol agree that although people might be very concerned about criminal activity in their neighbourhood, or other issues that affect the health and safety of their families, they often keep those concerns to themselves. They might not report these issues to the authorities or even feel comfortable discussing them with their neighbours. There can be many reasons for this reluctance, including:

- People don't know who to call about a problem;
- People don't trust the authorities and don't know what kind of response they will receive if they do report a problem;
- People are afraid they could be identified as an "informant" if they do report something, and face recrimination; or
- People don't know or don't trust their neighbours.

These concerns are often magnified when an individual is a newcomer to Canada and does not speak English well, or is living on a low income and might be unsure of his/her rights.

But they believe many residents do want to connect with each other to take action to address these issues. As Carol puts it, "What good is living in a nice home if you can't be secure?"

### *The United Neighbours Project*

West End residents like Moe and Carol approached the Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre (PQCHC) to help them develop a unified response to these community safety issues. United Neighbours was formed in 2008.

Developed with the support of CPO, United Neighbours brings together a large steering committee of community leaders, service providers, private renters, homeowners, tenants' associations, law enforcement officers and local business owners. It calls itself a "community-based and community-driven initiative" which focuses on decreasing crime and increasing people's feelings of safety and connectedness.

Robynn Collins, Project Coordinator for United Neighbours, says that one of the first steps in the process was a community survey, followed by a community forum to discuss priority issues. Eventually, four working groups were formed to develop action plans: Environment and Beautification; Community Safety; Programs and Services; and Drug and Alcohol Prevention and Intervention.

### *Coffee and Crime Prevention*

Based on discussions at the Community Forum and survey findings, it became apparent that residents wanted more information about what they could do to address their concerns about safety and criminal activity. More than that, they wanted to be able to discuss their concerns with each other and with the agencies they felt could help them. So the idea of the Community Safety Coffee Houses took shape.

According to Robynn, the Coffee Houses were seen as a way to bring local residents together in a friendly, casual, local setting for a conversation with one another and with key resource people, such as the Community Police Centre Officer or the OCH Security Officer. The Coffee Houses are usually held at a community house, because it is a comfortable setting that is easy for residents to reach. Local tenants' associations help organize and publicize the events.

Even the promotion of the Coffee Houses is done in an innovative way that promotes sharing of information with the residents. The Community Safety Working Group designed postcards to be distributed in the neighbourhoods prior to a Coffee House. The front of the card offers details of the upcoming Coffee House (date, time and location). Flip the card over and you find a "Who to Call" list of resources specific to crime and safety issues in the West End of Ottawa. The cards serve a dual purpose: they help inform residents about the event, and they have a longer life as a contact list that could be stuck on a fridge or by a phone.

Each of the coffee houses follows a similar format. All residents are welcome to attend and key partners are invited so residents can connect with them personally. Some partners that have participated include: OPS, OCH Security, PQCHC community developers and health promoters, Neighbourhood Watch, Crime Stoppers, and CPO. Early in the meeting, residents have a chance to talk about what they are seeing in the community, and issues that concern them. Later on, one of the partners speaks about the role of that organization and they are able to discuss with the residents how they can work most effectively together.

## *Impact on Communities*

Community Safety Coffee Houses have been held in OCH communities across the West End. Robynn says PQCHC tracks a number of measures to assess the effectiveness of the Coffee Houses. Some of the successes that have been reported include: increased reporting of suspected criminal activity; increased awareness among residents of the importance of reporting problems to police; better understanding among residents of how to report problems to police; and better access to and understanding of the meaning of police statistics.

The experience of three communities is described here to provide a sense of the impact of this initiative.

### Pinecrest Terrace

Pinecrest Terrace is an OCH community located on Iris Street not far from the new IKEA store. It is an older community of low-rise apartments and townhouses, home to 115 families coming from very diverse backgrounds including Somalia, Arabic-speaking countries, Francophone Africa, and Haiti.

According to Lomumba Eman, the Community House Coordinator, the Coffee House conversations initially focused on issues such as the desire to beautify the neighbourhood and to create an area where their children could play as the neighbourhood had been without a proper play area for ten years. Residents also wanted to improve the lighting because drug dealers were operating in darkened parts of the neighbourhood on summer evenings. Residents were fearful of retaliation for speaking out about such issues, however, because of a 2005 incident where an activist resident had his window shot through with a BB gun.

A consistent group of about 13-16 people has been attending the Coffee Houses, including people from across the community. Even some youth have participated, speaking about their desire to change the negative way they are perceived in the community, and their relationship with the police and OCH Security.

Stemming in part from the Coffee House conversations, a number of important initiatives have taken place at Pinecrest Terrace over the last two years. The residents organized a spring clean-up campaign; a community garden has been very popular; and a new playground and basketball court have been constructed – all initiatives in which many local residents have participated.

### Winthrop Court/Regina Lane

The Winthrop Court Community House serves three neighbourhoods in the Lincoln Heights area of Richmond Road: Winthrop Court, Regina Lane and Eva Taylor Court. Collectively, the three neighbourhoods are home to about 150 families. Many residents are on social assistance or ODSP, and some are working part-time jobs. Each neighbourhood is different, with Regina Lane having a large but stable population of new Canadians, whereas Winthrop Court tends to be more transient.

Denise Read, the Community House Coordinator, says the first coffee house at Winthrop Court attracted a cross-section of the community. Residents identified concerns about maintenance, burnt out lights and how to deal with the disruptive behaviour of some individuals. One of the major actions to come from this discussion was the organization of safety audits in Winthrop Court. In fact, the activity was so popular that it attracted half the community to participate. As a result, a number of lighting and safety issues were identified and forwarded to OCH for action.

The second Coffee House attracted a different group, mainly Somali women from Regina Lane (as a result of more focused outreach to that community). Many of the concerns were focused on traffic on Regina Lane and the hazards to children. They wanted to see the speed limit reduced, changes in signage and increased awareness about the need to look out for children playing. Residents discussed the idea of holding a street party to “take back” the lane. Mark Taylor, the City Councillor had become aware of these concerns prior to the Coffee House and was able to get City staff to address them, so now the community is thinking of a street celebration.

At Winthrop Court, meanwhile, the discussion is now turning to the creation of a park in a green space donated by the City. In a community that has not had access to an adequate play space, this issue has generated widespread enthusiasm. Nursing students doing a placement carried out a community survey, organized a community barbecue and mobilized residents to conduct a clean-up event. Some of the future community discussions will help residents continue to plan the transformation of vacant green space into a play space.

### Regina Towers

At Regina Towers, the 243-unit highrise that Carol Smith calls home, Carol is well-known. Known as “Community Carol” for her involvement in every aspect of community life, Carol made a very conscious decision to get involved in community safety issues following a messy divorce that left her fearing for her own safety. “I wanted to make sure the police knew who I was when I called,” says Carol.

One of the big issues at the Regina Towers Coffee House has been how OCH Security and police have responded to the string of robberies, as well as other problems such as squatters and drug addicts. Many residents feel the approach of replacing security officers with “Goodwill Ambassadors” sends the wrong message because people just don’t take them seriously. Another concern expressed by residents is how to keep their teens safe from gangs and drugs.

Carol strongly believes in the role Coffee Houses play as a place where people can vent and learn about the role of police, OCH Security and other partners. Coffee Houses can be important places for residents to talk about what they are seeing and experiencing, and to have their perceptions validated by others. It is also important for residents to make a personal connection to key resource people such as police and OCH Security. “It is not enough to give people a list of numbers to call; it is much better if people feel they have a personal connection.”

The Coffee House discussions led to a door-to-door campaign to visit every resident in the building and deliver a bag of resources (who to call, how to report concerns, and an opportunity to hear first-hand from residents about their concerns). PQCHC staff, resident volunteers, police, OCH security, and Councillor Mark Taylor conducted the visits.

### *Lessons Learned*

Carol Smith feels one of the most important factors contributing to the success of a Coffee House is the atmosphere. “The Coffee Houses should be relaxed, friendly places because the subject is tough.” They should also provide an opportunity for residents to vent, to get issues off their chests, and for their concerns to be taken seriously. Says Carol, “It is really important to listen to what the residents are saying. They are talking about the reality they feel they are living in. Sometimes, the official stats don’t reflect that reality but that can be because many incidents don’t get reported.”

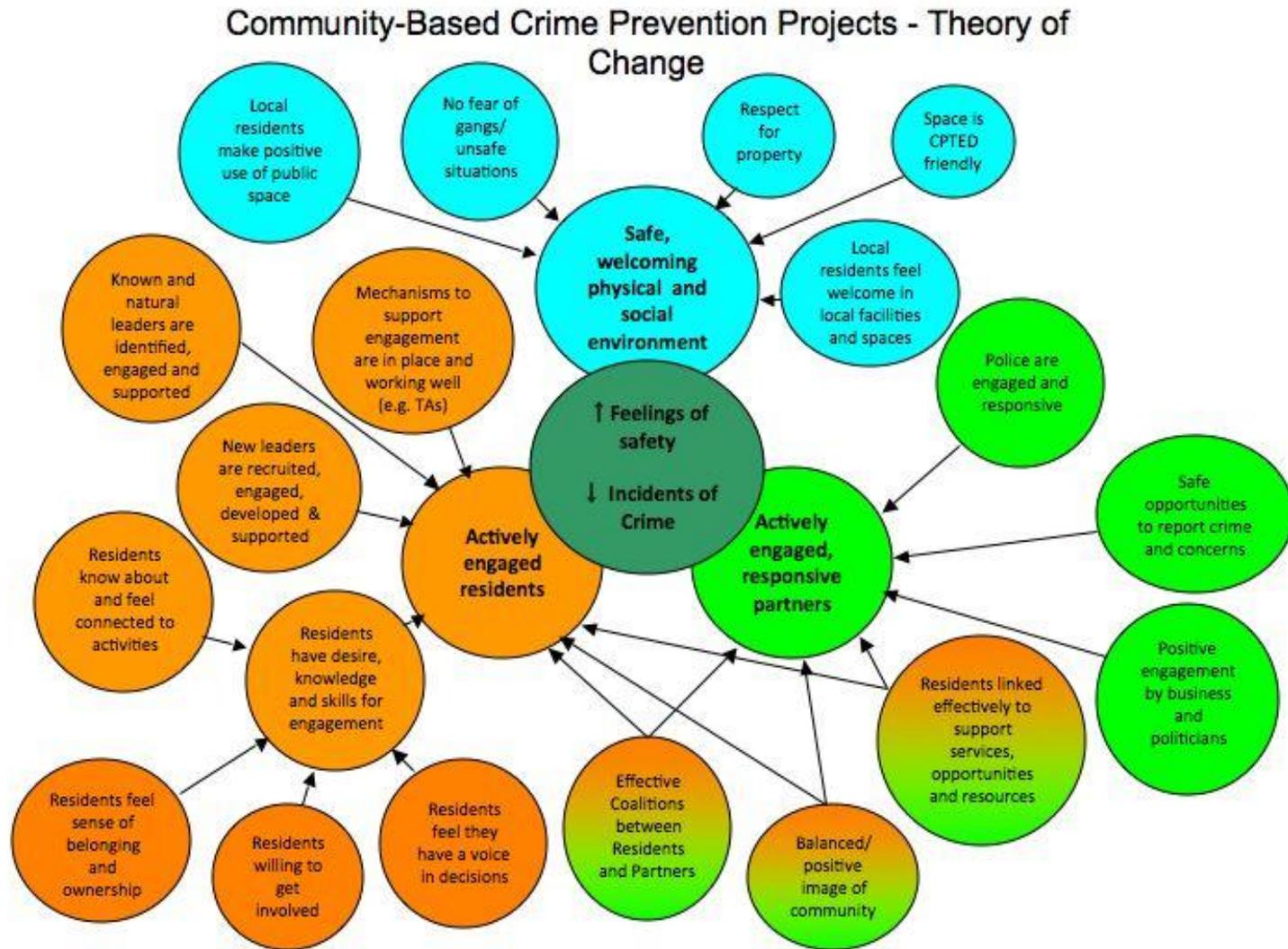
Moe Charlebois has attended Coffee Houses in many of the communities. He feels the real value of the Coffee Houses is that they provide a place for residents to talk their problems out and to connect with partners like the police about what they are doing and how they can work together. He sees a lot of similarity in the conversations in the different communities. He would like to see these conversations shared between communities as a way of getting discussion going on addressing common issues.

### *Advice to Others*

Coffee House organizers and participants offered the following advice to other communities interested in the idea:

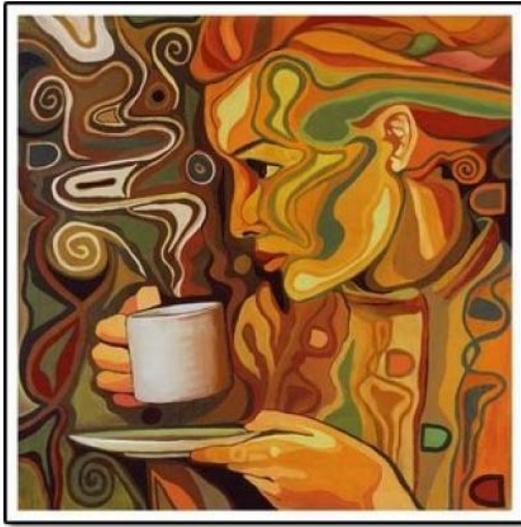
- Hold the Coffee Houses in an accessible, familiar location for residents. A community house is often ideal.
- Create a comfortable atmosphere. Offer coffee, donuts, and comfortable chairs.
- Outreach is very important. Use a personal approach (door-to-door, where possible) to get people out.
- Bring in speakers and resources who can address local issues.
- Give local residents plenty of time to discuss their concerns and ask questions.
- Keep the agenda flexible. Allow time to address urgent and emerging issues.
- Make the Coffee Houses a regular occurrence (e.g. every two-three months) so people can look forward to them and build on them.
- Make sure they are well-facilitated. Be prepared for interpersonal dynamics and issues that could be brought to meetings (e.g. neighbours in conflict or participants coming with their own agendas). It is useful to work with the residents to establish ground rules for these discussions.

# Appendix A – Theory of Change



## Appendix B – Invitation to Community Safety Coffee House

### 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](mailto: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

Baysshore 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







## **Crime Prevention Ottawa**

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