

MEALS ON WHEELS VOLUNTEERS

Much more than delivery of a hot meal

Ann, a retired public health nurse, drives to the first stop on her route with two meal runners in tow – Anna, a student completing her Masters of Global Affairs at University of Toronto, and Gloria, a longtime volunteer from the neighbourhood.

Gloria and Anna discuss the delivery route while Ann navigates the familiar streets she's been driving for Meals on Wheels for over eight years.

The three women don't see each other aside from Wednesday mornings when they get together to deliver meals to isolated seniors and people living with disabilities, but that hasn't stopped them from getting to know each other.

"I enjoy volunteering. It replaced my working life. The runners – we have fun.

We share stories," says Ann.

In between meal deliveries, there are inquiries about kids and grandkids, how Anna's presentation went at school – that, and lots of laughing. These women, ranging in age and experience, most likely would not know each other if it weren't for their involvement in Meals on Wheels. They are happy that volunteering brought them together. "I love hanging out with my ladies," says Anna.

In addition to getting to know each other, they have developed relationships with the people who receive the delivered meals. A volunteer shift is much more than the delivery of a hot meal – it is a personal check-in that many Meals on Wheels recipients look forward to.

Eric, a recipient of Meals on Wheels for a few years, is thankful for the program and the familiar faces he gets to see each week. "It's the only place I can get a decent meal around here," he says. Eric is one of the over 160 people who receive Meals on Wheels throughout our community currently.

Without the commitment of volunteers like Ann, Anna, and Gloria, the delivery of over 750 meals a week would not be possible. West NH is fortunate to operate in a community where people are willing to donate their time and work with us to support those who need a hand.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with Meals on Wheels, email volunteers@westnh.org or call 416-532-4828.

Refugee sponsorship update

Last year at this time West Neighbourhood House developed a Sponsored Refugee Fund. Thanks to many interested donors, we quickly achieved the goal amount that allowed us and two partner community groups to sponsor three refugee families from Syria. The families have yet to arrive in Canada – they are currently in Jordan and Turkey. We will keep you updated about their arrival and look forward to helping them settle once they get here.



Ann and Anna volunteer together for Meals on Wheels at West NH.



The Parkdale solidarity flag mural was revealed on the same day as the Parkdale Planning Study.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Working together for Parkdale community

The downtown west neighbourhoods where West NH works, like many other communities in Toronto, are changing rapidly. Affordable housing is scarce and it is becoming more difficult to find decent work.

One of the neighbourhoods in our catchment area that has felt this change most profoundly is Parkdale. From the Gardiner Expressway construction in the 1960s, to deinstitutionalization in the 1970s, to the influx of artists and higher-income residents starting in the 1990s, Parkdale has been undergoing change for decades. More recently, from 2013–2015, Parkdale lost 22 rooming houses/bachelorettes due to the hot housing market. This translates into the loss of some of the most affordable housing in downtown Toronto, affecting hundreds of people.

Our long partnership with University of Toronto's Professor David

Hulchanski and the Neighbourhood Change Project taught us that although change is a natural part of a city's development, how that change happens is not inevitable.

That is why West NH joined forces with other local agencies to work on the Parkdale Community Economic Development (PCED) Planning Project. This project, led by Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (PARC) and supported by the Atkinson Foundation, was an extensive collaboration between more than 25 organizations and hundreds of residents who live and work in Parkdale. The goal of the project was to create a Parkdale Neighbourhood

Plan for decent work, shared wealth building, and equitable development.

When the work began on the PCED project, we weren't starting from scratch. There were already community-based program innovations, strategies, assets, and policy tools in place throughout the neighbourhood. What we did was explore how those strategies and tools could work together to build an inclusive and equitable neighbourhood where newcomers and low-income people can continue to live.

West NH believes in the power of mixed communities, where people from diverse backgrounds can come together to build strong integrated neighbourhoods.

The plan developed seven areas for action and policy development:

- Social infrastructure
- Affordable housing and land use
- Decent work and inclusive economic opportunities
- Food security
- Community financing
- Participatory local democracy
- Cultural development

In line with West NH's strategic plan, we are providing direct leadership and support to five of the areas.

To learn more, please take a look at the Parkdale Planning Study that was published this past October: westnh.org/parkdaleplanning

West NH believes in the power of mixed communities, where people from diverse backgrounds can come together to build strong integrated neighbourhoods. We look forward to the phase of work on this project and are delighted to be working with so many great organizations and people to preserve Parkdale as a place for many diverse groups to call home.

■ Learn and get inspired – come to Talks@West

Over the years, West Neighbourhood House has cultivated spaces for experts to share their research and for curious community members and colleagues to come together, learn, and get inspired.

Recently, InWithForward, the social innovation team that has been working closely with our Meeting Place drop-in, re-energized this concept with numerous talks. Throughout 2015–2016 they held over 20 presentations for groups ranging from front-line workers to policy makers, from service-users to the academic community. These presentations were a great way for InWithForward to introduce their innovative work to a wide range of people.

West NH believes there is a lot of value in sharing information this way and as the demand for these events increases, we have become inspired to curate Talks@West more regularly.

At the last Talks@West held on November 22, long time friend and partner of West NH, John Stapleton, shared his latest thinking about why people living on a low income make “bad” decisions, as well as other insights into poverty’s effect on decision making.

The next Talks@West event will be held on:

- Tuesday, January 24, 6pm
- Bar Reposado, 136 Ossington Ave.

At this talk, West NH staff and others will be presenting the latest phase of our Informal Economy research.

If you are interested in attending the next Talks@West or would like to be added to our mailing list to find out about these events, please contact Kaleigh at kaleighwi@westnh.org or call 416-532-758 ext. 215.

Long live lifelong learning!



Over 50 community members, participants, staff members and volunteers took part for West NH!

Marathon participants raise \$25,000 for the House

Thanks to your generous support, West NH raised \$24,789 at the Scotia-bank Toronto Waterfront Marathon!

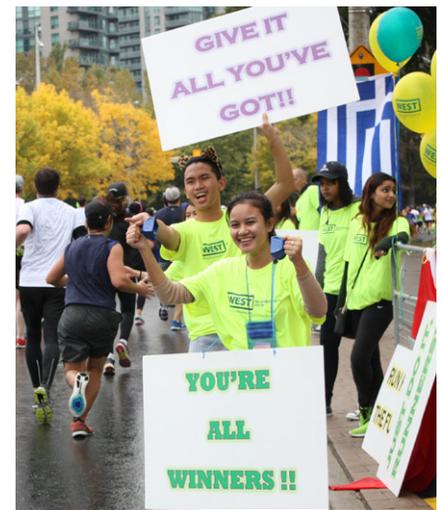
Thank you to those who helped spread the word about the event, those who ran, walked, and wheeled for the House (some in crazy costumes!), and those who so generously

donated. These funds will enable the House to support our programs that need it the most – specifically this year, our community development work, adult learning and literacy, the Music School, and supports for seniors.

Thank you!



Executive Director Maureen Fair ran as an escaped capybara!



Our supporters were out in full force on the sidelines too.



RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED
PORT DE RETOUR GARANTI



Please donate to our Annual Appeal

In order to continue improving lives in downtown west Toronto, we need your help. With your support, we can continue working with groups and individuals in the community to create the greatest possible impact on individual lives as well as on social conditions such as affordable housing, income security, and the labour market.

Please consider contributing to our Annual Appeal campaign and give West NH the resources it needs to change lives. When we work together, our community is stronger.

To donate to our Annual Appeal, visit westnh.org/donate or call 416-532-4828.



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