



Dishing up a 'recipe' for community vitality

Generous Torontonians make vision of Alexandra Park residents a reality

Toronto – June 13, 2009 –Residents of Alexandra Park were joined today by Mayor David Miller and Councillor Adam Vaughan (Ward 20 Trinity-Spadina) as they got their first taste of a new project aimed at creating a more vital community.

The “Recipe for Community” project, a resident-inspired partnership between the Toronto Community Foundation, the City of Toronto and Toronto Community Housing, blends four key ingredients into building a safe and healthy community: food, convening, youth engagement and neighbourhood beautification.

The ‘recipe’ was inspired by a fundholder at the Toronto Community Foundation who was eager to help the community in the wake of the most recent *Toronto’s Vital Signs*[®] report, an annual snapshot on the quality of life in Toronto, which highlighted a low sense of belonging and safety as key issues. The partners – or ‘chefs’ – paired the priorities identified by Alexandra Park residents to create the Recipe for Community initiative. Other fundholders at the Toronto Community Foundation jumped on board with their financial support as well.

"This initiative is about community building – supporting the development of safe, vibrant and prosperous neighbourhoods where residents feel a sense of opportunity and belonging," said Mayor Miller. "I'm pleased that the Toronto Office of Partnerships, the Toronto Community Foundation and Toronto Community Housing worked together to help make the residents' vision a reality."

Residents young and old rolled up their sleeves and worked together building window boxes, painting murals and planting an organic vegetable garden.

Over the course of the summer, a barbecue and cooking area will be added, along with benches, picnic tables and bleacher seating to provide a great place to enjoy a meal, watch a basketball game, or catch up with friends and family.

“The ‘Recipe for Community’ project will help create a more vital community in Alexandra Park,” said Toronto Community Foundation President & CEO Rahul K. Bhardwaj. “By creating public spaces, residents can meet and get to know their neighbours better, which helps build a safer community and a stronger sense of belonging.”

Local youth will be hired and trained to assist in the ongoing community beautification efforts, including the creation of public art installations (mosaics) and the construction of 300 custom-made window flowerboxes.

A community recipe book will also be published to showcase the many diverse people, stories and favourite dishes that contribute to Alexandra Park's vitality.

"Toronto Community Housing is committed to creating safe and healthy communities," said David Mitchell, Chair of Toronto Community Housing's Board of Directors. "Partnerships like Recipe for Community help us deliver on that commitment by promoting tenant engagement and fostering a sense of community pride and belonging."

Councillor Vaughan thanked the Toronto Community Foundation and its family of fund-holders. "Thank you for your vision, trust and commitment to building a more vital Toronto in partnership with residents. We are all proud to partner with the Toronto Community Foundation on this important initiative."

About Toronto Community Foundation:

With more than 400 endowment funds, and assets of over \$220 million, Toronto Community Foundation is one of Canada's largest charitable foundations. Community vitality has been our purpose, promise and passion since 1981, when we started connecting donors to community needs and opportunities. We help our individual and family foundations invest in Toronto, making it a strong and resilient place to live, work, learn and grow. We monitor the health of our city, identifying its strengths and weaknesses. We provide the leadership and guidance to bring people together from all parts of our community. We exist for Toronto - for now and for always.

About the Toronto Office of Partnerships

The Toronto Office of Partnerships (TOP) grew out of the mayor's election platform and was created in 2007 with the mandate of making the City a more desirable and efficient partner. Since then, TOP has quickly matured into a Centre of Excellence for partnership knowledge, policy development, customer service to internal and external stakeholders and support for the City's programs, services and priorities through a one-window approach.

About Toronto Community Housing:

Toronto Community Housing is Canada's largest social housing provider and home to more than 164,000 tenants with low and moderate income – about six per cent of the City of Toronto's population. These families, seniors, refugees, recent immigrants and people with special needs reside in 58,500 households in communities throughout Toronto.

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