

## **BACKGROUND – RECIPE FOR COMMUNITY**

### **WHAT IS RECIPE FOR COMMUNITY?**

Recipe for Community is an exciting initiative led by the Toronto Community Foundation in partnership with the City of Toronto Office of Partnerships. The program improves our city one neighbourhood at a time by engaging neighbourhood residents, young and old, to improve safety and the sense of belonging in their communities.

Each year, the Recipe for Community model is taken to a different neighbourhood. In 2009, it took place in Alexandra Park. This year, the Recipe for Community model will be held in the St. James Town neighbourhood as part of the City's Tower Renewal Project in partnership with Toronto Community Housing.

### **WHY RECIPE FOR COMMUNITY?**

In 2008, the Toronto's Vital Signs® Report produced by the Toronto Community Foundation highlighted a low sense of belonging and safety as key issues for our city.

A sense of security and safety affects the quality of life in Toronto and our ability to enjoy life to the fullest. Personal safety determines how Torontonians socialize and participate in their neighbourhoods and city. Additionally, the more we feel connected to others, the more vibrant and resilient we are, individually and collectively.

### **THE GOAL**

With each Recipe for Community project, the goal is to facilitate resident-inspired projects that strengthen community belonging and pride, and build community skills and capacity. Recipe for Community brings together the following key "ingredients":

- Community Engagement & Capacity Building
- Food
- Convening and Gathering
- Neighbourhood Beautification

### **RECIPE FOR COMMUNITY: ST. JAMES TOWN**

The City's Tower Renewal Project will coordinate local partnerships with residents, community agencies, City services and Toronto Community Housing. The Recipe for Community Project will include a range of activities focused on building a stronger community in the St. James Town neighbourhood. The Recipe for Community model is consistent with the Tower Renewal vision for the sustainability of Toronto's apartment neighbourhoods: a cleaner and greener city, stronger communities, increased social and cultural benefits, and enhanced local economic activity.

## SAMPLE OF THE 2010 PROGRAM

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CAPACITY BUILDING

**Carpentry Program** A new carpentry program will train and employ local residents to construct benches and flower boxes for installation throughout the St. James Town neighbourhood.

**Bike Repair & Maintenance Program** A new program will teach residents how to refurbish, repair and maintain their bicycles. It will also encourage the adoption and reuse of many of the hundreds left abandoned throughout the area.

### FOOD

**Recipe Book** Residents from St. James Town will work both together and inter-generationally to collect recipes, photos, and stories that reflect the community's diversity and strength's, publishing them in a neighbourhood recipe book. The book will be the second in the Recipe for Community series.

### CONVENING

**Safety Audit Project** Up to 15 youth leaders will facilitate a community safety audit, bringing residents together to identify safety concerns, discuss relevant solutions, and develop action plans to prevent violence. Youth will work with adults in the neighbourhood.

**Improved Public Spaces** Residents will help create a variety of spaces with tables and seating in shared areas to support informal opportunities for community gathering, for example enjoying a meal, celebrating a special event, or just catching up with family and friends.

### NEIGHBOURHOOD BEAUTIFICATION

**Vertical Gardens** Neighbours will have the opportunity to learn about balcony vegetable and flower gardens and how to install them on their dwelling, encouraging the greening of vertical space.

**Basketball Courts** The current half-court will grow to a full-sized one, and will be revitalized with new nets, fences and court lines.

## TORONTO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Community vitality has been our purpose, promise, and passion since 1981, when we started connecting donors to community needs and opportunities. Home to over 300 funds, we help people invest in Toronto, making it the best place to live, work, learn and grow. We monitor the quality of life in our city, identifying its strengths and weaknesses through our Toronto's Vital Signs® report. 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.

## 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.

## TOWER RENEWAL OFFICE

In September 2008, City Council recognized Tower Renewal as an opportunity to make tremendous progress on a wide range of City initiatives. By engaging in tower renewal projects, we can dramatically improve the energy, water and waste efficiency of the more than 1,000 high rise residential concrete frame buildings located throughout Toronto and reduce associated release of greenhouse gases and air pollutants while also seizing on the creation of economic development and ways to better connect residents with community services and amenities.

Through the Tower Renewal project, Toronto's older apartment buildings will be transformed to achieve:

- ***A cleaner and greener city*** by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing energy efficiency, improving public transportation, cycling and pedestrian options, using renewable and district energy, improving public spaces, recycling and water efficiency measures.
- ***Stronger communities*** through job opportunities, better availability of local food and services, safe and enjoyable community connections, improved open space and outdoor recreational space, and the involvement of tenants in the process.
- ***Increased social and cultural benefits*** through local cultural initiatives, and improvements to the built and natural surroundings in neighbourhoods.
- ***Improved local economic activity*** through on-site retail and services, employment training and business opportunities particularly in green technology.