



Neighbourhood Small Grants Bowen Island

We acknowledge with gratitude that we live and work on the unceded territories of the Squamish (Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh), Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm), Tsleil-Waututh (Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh), and Sechelt (Shíshálh) First Nations.

The more we know each other, the stronger we are

We lead busy lives. We work hard and sometimes commute long distances. We have families to care for and errands to run. Who has time to socialize with the neighbours? Research and surveys find significant benefits to connecting with neighbours in more than just a superficial way. When neighbours know and trust each other, streets are safer, local businesses thrive, people are healthier and happier, our children do better in school and in their development, and there is less bullying, discrimination and addiction in our communities.

When we know our neighbours, we are better off in many of the ways that matter.

Communities of place offer a safety net where we support one another and act cooperatively. Other kinds of community can too, but our neighbours are often right where we need them when we need them most – close by.



The benefits of communities of place:

Resources and Networks: Communities of place can provide a greater awareness of neighbourhood resources such as local spaces and organizations, and opportunities to build those resources as well as to collectively address local issues. They provide opportunities to meet diverse people, expanding our social network to include people of varied backgrounds, ages, identities, and interests.



Safety: The degree to which neighbours know one another and how often people are out in their yards and on the street are major contributors to the safety within an area. The more eyes on the street, the less crime. The more people are watching out for each other, the safer they are. Children are safer when they know which neighbours they can ask for help if a parent isn't near. We are all safer when we have the ability to provide mutual support in emergencies such as earthquakes or storms.

Local economies: Strong neighbourhoods help build a strong economy by helping to promote local businesses. Often neighbours are among the first to support a business when they are starting out. Neighbours, like other kinds of social connections, can also support people economically in other ways such as lending and borrowing expensive items like yard equipment, helping each other fix things, assisting people to find jobs and so on. The stronger a local economy is, the more

a community can weather difficult economic times, such as layoffs from larger corporations or food security issues.

Community involvement: Connections with neighbours are associated with other forms of neighbourhood and community involvement. People who have had neighbours over to their homes and have been invited over by their neighbours, are also most likely to have participated in a neighbourhood or community project in the past year, and to have attended a neighbourhood or community meeting. It can even mean that they are more likely to vote, read the newspaper and volunteer. The more people we know in our community, the more we feel responsible to help out and the more we feel invested.

Reducing isolation: Strong neighbourhoods also simply allow for daily and spontaneous social interactions, rather ones we need to plan with people who live farther away. This reduces isolation, particularly for seniors, single parents, people living in poverty, people with disabilities and other people for whom it might be harder to connect with other kinds of community.

Building trust and belonging: When strangers living in close proximity become trusting neighbours, then trust can 'jump the fence' and spread to the larger community. Care and compassion can grow when people trust one another. People can set aside their differences and work together to solve small, local problems like cleaning up a park, or large, complex problems like poverty and homelessness. Trusting the people around us also increases our sense of belonging.

Creating a sense of village: Karen Reed, an NSG Project Leader and Neighbourhood Granting Committee member describes the process of building neighbourliness as "creating a sense of village":
<http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/latest/creating-a-sense-of-village-in-your-neighbourhood>

