

Clarkson Community at Peace



Sue Piotrowski & Stephanie Wyndham are two dynamic women who have a common vision – “to create a culture in the community of Clarkson that supports peace; one that is safe, nurturing, welcoming and embraces diversity”. Both women grew up in a small town setting – one in Ontario and the other in Quebec – where neighbours knew each other, where children felt safe walking to and from school, where people passing each other on the street smiled and greeted each other, and where people took pride in their community. As adults, both women moved to Clarkson to raise their families, but have missed the sense of community they enjoyed when growing up.

Sue and Stephanie met and became friends while serving on the Willow Glen School Council. Through their participation on the school council, Sue and Stephanie became familiar with the changes the Peel District School Board made in its “Safe Schools Policy” in 2008, and they also became aware of the “Peaceful Schools International” organization. Their common thought was, “Why limit this to our schools? We want a safe and peaceful community too!”, and thus the idea of an organization for the Clarkson community to promote safety and peace was conceived.

Sue and Stephanie met with Regional Councillor Pat Mullin and Mississauga South MPP Charles Sousa and both were very supportive of the idea of a safe and peaceful organization being developed in Clarkson. The Clarkson Community Centre Program Department in Clarkson was the next to get on board with the idea, following which contact was made with the local school principals and trustees. The Clarkson Community At Peace Committee was organized, with representatives from councils of the Clarkson family of schools, including the ward’s Peel District School Board Trustee, Don Stephens, Mississauga Recreation and Parks, Clarkson Library, Peel Public Health, Brampton

Multicultural Centre, Clarkson Seniors Association and various local businesses. In addition, the Ward 2 Councillor, Pat Mullin, and the local MPP, Charles Sousa, are kept informed of all CCAP's initiatives and events and provide their complete support. The committee has grown to include more Clarkson based schools from the Dufferin Peel Catholic School Board, with great support from their school trustee, Sharon Hobin, and Safe Communities Canada. Initial funding was obtained through the United Way of Peel Community Development Department. In addition, the Committee plans to embark on a strategic planning process to establish the organization's short and long term goals.

Clarkson Community At Peace has spread the word about their organization through a variety of methods – word of mouth, school newsletters, a connection with connect2ENDviolence, and more recently a website and a Facebook page. CCAP has hosted three events over the past two years. The events have served a dual purpose – firstly, they have brought the community together in a social setting, which has provided opportunities for the residents of Clarkson to meet and interact with each other, and secondly, the events have raised awareness of this neighbourhood organization and its vision for Clarkson.

The 2009 Spring Fling was CCAP's first neighbourhood event, and activities were planned to interest the entire family. Approximately 400 – 500 people attended the event and the feedback that was received was enthusiastic and positive. In February 2010 CCAP hosted a pancake breakfast – the event was free to attend, and included a food drive to support The Compass (a group of churches that provide relief to people struggling with life's challenges). This event was smaller, but once again those in attendance provided very positive feedback. The 2010 Ultimate Block Party was held on a beautiful Saturday in June and was an unqualified success – there were over 700 in attendance and families arrived early and spent the entire day mingling with other residents and neighbours from their community.

Stephanie commented that, "The success of these events is an affirmation that people want to do things in their own neighbourhood. It's exciting to see people starting to connect with each other!"

Clarkson Community At Peace hopes to take Safe City Mississauga's concept of a "Neighbours Night Out" and organize a number of small neighbourhood or street events over the next few months. They will also be working to establish connections with their local ratepayers associations and rotary clubs. The ultimate goal of Clarkson Community At Peace is for the residents of Clarkson to get to know each other and develop and strengthen a sense of community.

Sue and Stephanie's advice to others who are wondering how to make a difference in their community is: Get involved! Volunteer in your school or the community - show your children it's a rewarding experience. Instead of complaining about a problem, do something about it!

Contact Information:

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