An intercultural approach
Neighbourhoods flourish when the city flourishes

Stories of Being, Belonging, and Becoming in Renfrew-Collingwood

To work interculturally means we focus on building bridges and exchanges between people. It requires a leap of imagination and courage to explore.

The vibrancy of our cities is based, for the most part, on the vibrancy of the neighbourhoods that make up a city.

Through our work in Renfrew-Collingwood, we learned that to work interculturally means we focus on building bridges and exchanges between people and encourage them to bring their unique gifts and approaches to creating solutions around common interests. This approach is greatly advanced when we create more opportunities for connections. Neighbourhoods provide many places of interaction such as schools, parks, businesses, and housing. Experiences of organizations, like the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, that focus on inclusive, place-based development can provide useful information to enhance civil society.
We learned many hard lessons as we tried to bring diverse groups together, build neighbourhood meeting places, find resources, balance competing interests, address racism and exclusive attitudes, and think “outside the box” to create the community that neighbourhood leaders envisioned.

This information examines relationships and collaborative work done from the perspective of people who work within a neighbourhood and supported by a neighbourhood house, an organization mandated to develop services and build a sense of community within a geographic area of a city.

Residents and workers in Renfrew-Collingwood who experienced these changes and involved themselves in social and community development work describe it as a great transformational learning process and one that continues. It continues to be recreated as new people bring their ideas and gifts forward. It teases out the unique practices and approaches used by the Collingwood Neighbourhood House and the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood as they took this developmental journey over 25 years.
Knowledge shared

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A group of advisors and the CNH Board of Directors provided guidance on this exploration journey. They were critical participants in reflecting on the content and process and provided links to others working in the field.

Collingwood Neighbourhood House staff and local volunteers helped to gather stories, organize a resource library of presentations, conduct research and provide organizational support. They reflected on our history, culture, leadership, and developmental journey.
Key questions addressed

What are the key capabilities and conditions needed for growing community within an intercultural neighbourhood?

What are the unique gifts that leaders of all ages and backgrounds bring to growing community within an intercultural neighbourhood?

This exploration has been captured in written papers, film, digital stories and presentations. This paper is the first edition and work is underway to create an interactive edition that will provide more detailed information on examples of strategies, and links to electronic resource material that can be used to create further dialogue, learning, and action.
Where do we go from here?

This summary of lessons from the Renfrew-Collingwood case study is a starting point for conversations in the neighbourhood and elsewhere.

lets talk:
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GROWING AN INTERCULTURAL NEIGHBOURHOOD, GROWING A CIVIL SOCIETY
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