

ANHBC Toolkit for Starting and Sustaining a Neighbourhood House



Association of
Neighbourhood Houses of BC



Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC

Dedication

This Toolkit is dedicated to the organizations, communities and committed individuals who, through their work in building compassionate and supportive Neighbourhood Houses, created a sense of belonging and ultimately social change in their Neighbourhoods.

Acknowledgements

The Authors of this Toolkit sincerely thank Dr. Miu Chung Yan of the University of British Columbia. As a result of Miu's initiative and extensive research in the Neighbourhood House Movement, the idea of creating this toolkit was launched.

We received valuable inspiration and constant encouragement from the many Neighbourhood Houses we visited in British Columbia and Ontario, Canada and from a comprehensive survey of overseas Settlements. They shared and discussed their countless tools and stories for this publication. Their time, effort and dedication to the betterment of their local neighbourhoods are acknowledged. A full list of the Neighbourhood House contributors is included herein.

This publication could not have been possible without the devotion, understanding, and expertise of Karen Larcombe and Natalie Taylor of ANHBC. These very special individuals compiled, collated, researched and completed this unique toolkit on starting and sustaining a Neighbourhood House.

Special thanks also go to our Toolkit Advisory Committee, who through their collective knowledge, helped this project move forward.

Our gratitude is extended as well to Jessica Sass for her editing and technical skills in bringing this information to fruition and also to Jose Corral, who, as a remarkable designer, prepared the current print format.

ANHBC:
www.anhbc.org



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Glossary



Introduction



Introduction

What is the Neighbourhood House Toolkit?

The first of its kind, the Toolkit for Starting and Sustaining a Neighbourhood House (NH) is a practical, “how-to” manual for anyone in the community interested in developing and sustaining a Neighbourhood House. An innovative guide, this manual serves as a detailed orientation to all aspects of NH development; from starting a NH from the ground up, to running a strong and community directed organization. With the collaboration and pooling of shared knowledge from 21 emerging and well-established NHs, invaluable input was provided to the Toolkit. The only comprehensive guide that encompasses the existing tried and tested practices, strategies and knowledge gathered from NHs themselves, the Toolkit comprises a century of collaboratively accrued knowledge. It leads communities to create spaces for themselves to enrich their neighbourhoods and allow residents to lead happy and healthy lives.

The purpose of the Toolkit is to serve as a dynamic living reference, that grows and changes to represent the diverse communities from which Neighbourhood Houses are born.

This **hands-on manual** is designed to outline the major steps in starting and sustaining a NH in a clear, concise way that allows information to be available to anyone who needs it.

Our overarching goal for the Toolkit is to create a space for global dialogue about NHs and to support the importance of community collaboration by providing the necessary tools with which to create and sustain a Neighbourhood House.

How Did this Toolkit Come About?

The Association of Neighbourhood Houses of British Columbia (ANHBC), founded in 1894, is an umbrella organization under which seven Neighbourhood Houses (NHs) and one outdoor activity centre operate (www.anhbc.org). At the forefront of community capacity building, ANHBC bridges innovative programming with individuals and families of all ages, abilities, and nationalities throughout B.C. As a volunteer-driven, community service agency, our goal is to enable people to embrace their lives and strengthen their neighbourhoods. ANHBC’s Neighbourhood Houses and Camps see more than 270,000 individual visits annually. This is 17 % of the population of Vancouver. Many NHs have programs aimed at children and youth, and one third of NH participants are between the ages of two and eighteen. ANHBC Houses serve all community members: children, youth, adults and seniors. From daycare to seniors’ lunches and cultural dinners to counselling support and youth leadership training, over 50,000 hours of volunteer time is spent across ANHBC.

Drawing on more than 100 years of experience and accumulated knowledge, ANHBC helps NHs with proven strategies for community building, financial management, program delivery and volunteer engagement. A leader in mentoring and capacity building in the field of community development, ANHBC has created this guide to nurture Neighbourhood House development. Growing demand for this information prompted the creation of this Toolkit.

Partnerships Acknowledgement

ANHBC partnered with the University of British Columbia's (UBC) School of Social Work to conduct extensive research on NHs for the Toolkit. The Toolkit manual consists of a selection of stories from 21 NHs that offer strategies for success. Stories quoted in the Toolkit come from in-depth interviews targeting NHs of different sizes, locations and stages of development. The individuals who have collaborated on this project have generously shared their stories and experiences to turn theory into practice. We thank our UBC and NH partners for their participation

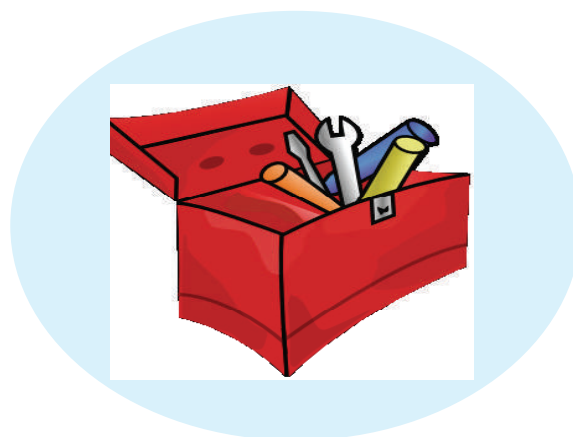
Neighbourhood Houses

Starting and sustaining a NH is a unique, distinguishable process compared to starting other types of non-profit organizations. While incorporating as a non-profit is part of the process, NHs are different as they exist solely for and of the community. NHs exist as part of an ongoing dialogue within neighbourhoods and between neighbours with the central focus being to strengthen community ties and provide needed services and resources in order to enrich the community.

A Neighbourhood House is about grassroots: collaborative discussions with the goal of community capacity building. NH programming is defined by, and exists solely for the benefit of the community. Through a distinctively “bottom-up” approach, starting a NH allows for a meaningful, place-based strategy that takes the needs of the people in the neighbourhood into primary consideration. A NH exists to provide community members with the necessary tools to cultivate lasting relationships, and improve access to needed resources for everyone. Our vision is to create vibrant communities empowered to play an active role in society, supported by their neighbours and community organizations to help residents lead healthy, full lives. This toolkit outlines in detail each step towards starting and sustaining a NH developed through the voice of the people. With the understanding that real life experiences are the building blocks of any NH, real stories, quotes, anecdotes and advice are woven throughout the manual, providing valuable on-the-ground insight into the world of

NHs. The seams of the Toolkit manual are the voices from the NHs themselves, and they will guide you through each step.

What's Inside the Toolkit?



The Toolkit contains six sections, each of which reflects the key requirements for NH development: **(1) Building Community (2) Organization and Governance (3) Partnerships (4) Funding and Resource Development (5) Programming and (6) Volunteers.** These key requirements were identified from our research questionnaires and in-depth interviews with Executive Directors, Board Members and Program Coordinators working in NHs.

Each section contains an overview of the key requirements, steps, strategies, helpful tips, resources and ideas for “troubleshooting” potential challenges. Stories of both struggles and successes are embedded throughout the Toolkit sharing real-life lessons from people working and volunteering in NHs. A glossary defines key terms referred to throughout the manual.

Neighbourhood Houses (NH)

Agincourt Community Services Association

www.agincourtcommunityservices.com

Alexandra

www.alexhouse.net

The Bridge Youth and Family Services

www.thebridgeservices.ca

Cedar Cottage

www.cedarcottage.org

Collingwood

www.cnh.bc.ca

Cowichan

www.cnha.ca

Downtown East Side

dtesnhouse.ca

Frog Hollow

www.froghollow.bc.ca

Gordon

gordonhouse.org

Jane Finch Community and Family Centre

www.janefinchcentre.org

Kitsilano

www.kitshouse.org

Kiwassa

www.kiwassa.ca

Little Mountain

www.lmnhs.bc.ca/wp

Mount Pleasant

www.mphn.org

North Shore

www.nsnh.bc.ca

Oak Avenue
www.oanh.ca

Pillsbury United
Communities
www.puc-mn.org

Sasamat Outdoor
Centre
www.sasamat.org

Burnaby
<http://burnabynh.ca/>

South Vancouver
www.southvan.org

Toronto
Neighbourhood
Centres
[www.
neighbourhoodcentres
.ca](http://www.neighbourhoodcentres.ca)

International Survey
of American and
European Settlement
Houses
International
Federation of
Settlement Members
www.ifsnetwork.org

The Background Basics:

What is a Neighbourhood House?

A NH is a warm, friendly place where people of all ages come together to meet individual and collective needs of their neighbourhood and to play an active role in their community. Utilizing local resources and talents, the NH is a neighbourhood-based, volunteer-driven and locally governed organization combining services, community building and social change activities. NHs are part of a shared common heritage and part of an international settlement movement - a movement with deep roots in working for social justice. While globally NHs may go by other names such as "Settlement Houses", "Neighbourhood Centres" or "Settlement Centres", they all exist for the same purpose - for the benefit of the community.

What a Neighbourhood House Provides for Your Neighbourhood?

- A living room for the community to meet and celebrate
- A welcoming space for people of all ages, ethnicities, cultures, classes, sexual orientations and abilities
- A place for neighbours to get involved in the community as volunteers
- A place to meet the needs of the community
- A space to build and strengthen your neighbourhood and share information and experiences with neighbours

When is a Neighbourhood House Started in the Community?

A NH is developed when people in the community decide that they would like to collectively create a welcoming, caring space to bring people from the neighbourhood together to work on

community issues, develop services, socialize, and support each other.

Why Start a Neighbourhood House?

A NH is a **central hub that can enrich neighbourhood life**. Often referred to as the "heart of the community", a NH is a **model for social inclusion and justice**. This is seen in their activities, values, and vision for more equitable, interconnected and welcoming neighbourhoods. **Social inclusion** involves taking active steps at a local neighbourhood level to promote equal access to rights, opportunities and **resources** such as: food security, housing, employment, income security, education, healthcare, civic participation, personal safety, and legal justice. From the NH perspective, **social inclusion** and justice result in:

- Equitable access to goods and services
- The opportunity to participate in the social, economic and cultural life of the neighbourhood and society
- Greater participation in decision-making affecting individual's lives and the community as a whole
- Elimination of all forms of discrimination

Where Did Neighbourhood Houses Come From?

NHs can be traced back to the British Settlement House Movement of the late 19th century. The first Settlement House, Toynbee Hall, opened in East London in 1884 with a mission to connect the rich and the poor in the community. The settlement house pioneers, recognizing that poverty resulted from root societal causes and living conditions, set out to work with residents in the neighbourhood to achieve lasting change in the lives of individuals and in community conditions.

The name ‘settlement houses’ comes from the early days at the turn of the century, when workers ‘settled’ in low-income neighborhoods. Settling in the community allowed them, as residents, to directly connect and understand the needs of immigrants, factory workers, and the very poor. Working alongside local residents, workers pursued community building goals through integrating social change activism and services.

Settlement houses contributed to social reforms, public education and public health services. The success of Toynbee Hall led to an international movement resulting in these houses being built around the world.

Each NH has its own unique beginning. The NH movement in British Columbia dates back to the late 1800’s to early 1900’s with the development of Camp Alexandra (now Alexandra Neighbourhood House). Camp Alexandra began with the Alexandra Orphanage enabling disadvantaged children to experience life outside of the city. Social workers at that time recognized the importance of camp as a critical element in helping people understand each other, build leadership and experience life outside of the city. Camps are still an integral part of the Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC.

“Camps and Outdoor Centres provide a learning environment that builds qualities such as confidence and self-esteem. The experience of a positive and nurturing camp community can lead people to increased participation in their own city communities.”
Executive Director,
Sasamat Outdoor Centre.

Where Do You Find a Neighbourhood House?

NHs can be located in any neighbourhood in any community around the world. They are located in city centres, suburban areas and in rural communities. Each NH is “place-based” with unique

activities that grow from and reflect the local neighbourhood. The NH facility is usually a street level “storefront” location that is an easily accessible public space where all can feel comfortable. However, many NHs start in a space donated by another organization such as in a church basement where they can begin development until **resources** for renting an independent space are found.

Who Starts a Neighbourhood House?

There are different ways a NH can start. Here are two common methods:

1. Local residents come up with the idea

A NH may start with a group of dedicated residents developing a vision for a gathering space in their neighbourhood and possessing the willingness to start organizing themselves to achieve that vision. This group of residents will then form the **Board of Directors** for the NH.*

“Volunteers who had been doing community service through their church decided to start a Neighbourhood Hub where they could expand their services beyond the Church. They decided to form a board of directors and turn the facility into a non-profit to reach a more diverse community of people.”

Program Coordinator, Oak Avenue NH.

For examples of NHs that started by local residents, visit Oak Avenue Neighbourhood Hub Society at www.oanh.ca or Cowichan Neighbourhood House Association at www.cnha.ca

2. Someone working in the community introduces the idea

A NH may start when an organization or city planner initiates a discussion with residents about the benefits of developing a NH for the community.

* See section 2 on Organization and Governance p.22

"Just before Expo, the City of Vancouver was developing a plan for land-use in each of the communities that the sky train was being built through. In the development of this plan a city planner worked with the community to talk about a plan for the neighbourhood. The NH model came out of those meetings and so the NH was formed." Collingwood NH.

For an example of a NH that began in this way, visit Collingwood Neighbourhood House at www.cnh.bc.ca

How to Get Started?

In addition to this Toolkit, hands-on help can be available to mentor and nurture a new NH. In some areas, an association for neighbourhood houses/centres may be available to help point you in the right direction. NHs are also eager to help each other by sharing experiences and tools. Engaging in ongoing mutual support and information sharing helps connect NHs in the settlement movement.



**Grab your Toolkit
and let's get
started...**

*Remember: Developing a NH is a labour of love. Have Fun!
The lifelong friends you make and the community you build happen at every stage of development.*

Section 1: Building Community



Section 1: Building Community

- Find early **champions** willing to give their time and expertise
- Discover **community** assets and needs through neighbourhood outreach, mapping, advisory groups and social activities
- Harness the assets of people living and working in the neighbourhood
- Promote residents' participation, leadership, and commitment to enriching the neighbourhood
- Reflect community diversity by involving people possessing different life experiences and identities
- Create networks by collaborating with other local groups and institutions
- Build community capacity to connect with external **resources** and decision makers

Community building focuses on the positive attributes of individuals and is part of everything the NH does. Examples of how NHs integrate community building into activities are found in each section of the Toolkit.

How Does a Neighbourhood House Build Community?

The NH may start with one person's vision and passion for a stronger community. They share that vision with friends and start bringing neighbours together for social activities such as a potluck dinner. As the group grows and more people are encouraged to get involved and take control, the activities grow in scope and size. ¹

1. See "practical steps for connecting with residents" on page 16

2. See "practical steps for connecting with residents: asset mapping strategies" on page 16

3. See "practical steps for connecting with local organizations" on page 17

"I think the first step in starting a NH is community building. We started to hold community dinners, socializing and connecting and building interrelationships – intercultural, intergenerational – which no one else was doing in our area, so that was unique, which is what a NH is about, getting people involved and sharing

experiences and cultures." Executive Director, South Burnaby NH.

As the NH develops, it acts like a bridging agent to build connections between different individuals, groups and organizations in the neighbourhood. The NH becomes an essential part of the community by reaching out and developing a network for working together towards shared community goals.

The process of building community is also referred to as community capacity building. Building community capacity means discovering and encouraging people's skills, knowledge and passion for enhancing their neighbourhood and connecting with internal and external resources needed to take community action. ²

For an emerging NH, one key ingredient to successful community building is to **find early champions** - people who support your vision and are willing to donate time or other **resources**: residents, municipal officials, political figures, business leaders (Chamber of Commerce, Rotary), service clubs (Kiwanis, Lions, Royal Canadian Legion), social workers, leaders in local institutions such as schools, health centres and religious organizations. ³

When all parts of the community are working together, new opportunities are made possible. Developing a **community skills inventory** can help identify people who are able to contribute their time and skills to the NH.

"The neighbourhood house began by our community pulling together. The local municipality agreed to rent out the NH building for \$1/month and neighbours volunteered their time, skills and craftsmanship enabling us to open our doors to the public. A member of our community who is a professional counselor supported us financially and would come by the NH and do counseling



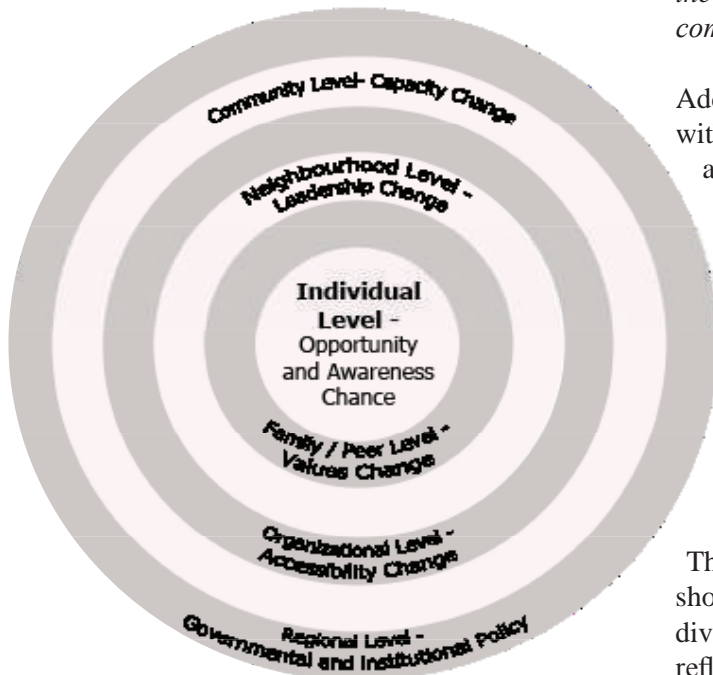
with youth after his office hours. Youth whose families had no money received big time counseling for free."

Executive Director, Cowichan NH.

taken to address potential barriers to getting involved.

Be **intentional** about bringing diverse people together to create something new to improve the neighbourhood or to address issues in your community.

Addressing barriers means taking steps to work with people where they are at in life. For example, recognize potential literacy barriers by asking people if they want help completing forms; provide child care to single parents; provide a meal and transportation to people living in poverty; translate materials and provide staff or volunteers with language skills to make connections and engage with new immigrants.



The Diversity Wheel

The diversity wheel is a way of visually showing the differences and similarities across diverse populations. The inner part of the wheel reflects those elements of self that are more concrete whereas the outer parts of the wheel reflects those parts of ourselves that are more prone to change. The wheel captures how people’s unique combination of physical, social and economic characteristics can affect access to power and privileges of Canadian society. For example, Canada is a multicultural society, yet white males occupy most positions of political and economic power in the country. The NH takes steps to offset these uneven power relations by proactively removing barriers to participation experienced by people who are underprivileged. By taking positive steps to treat everyone as equally important, NHs provide positive role models for working towards an equitable society.

Diversity strengthens creativity by challenging our ability to view and experience many perspectives in order to find common ground to move forward. By bringing people together who may not otherwise be in contact, we can open up new ways of thinking about and viewing the world. Working collaboratively as a diverse group can broaden the horizon of the neighbourhood, and can often bring issues to the table that may have otherwise been overlooked.

Community Capacity Building*

A NH builds community capacity at all levels by engaging the assets of individuals, families, neighbourhood groups, organizations, local institutions and government. Beginning with individual grassroots knowledge and leadership, community change occurs when all these different levels of society are connected and working together.**

Social Inclusion in Community Building

NHs take positive steps to include people who have different life experiences, abilities and identities in community building initiatives by reaching out, making people feel welcomed and connected with opportunities for contributing their unique gifts. By understanding the impact of social class, age, race, culture, gender, sexual orientation and different abilities on people’s capacity for joining NH activities, steps can be

* Community Capacity Building Courtesy of Coyne (2009) Neighbourhood-Focused Approaches: building caring, inclusive and safe communities throughout the Lower Mainland (an unpublished report).

**From: Coyne (2009) Neighbourhood-Focused Approaches: building caring, inclusive and safe communities throughout the Lower Mainland (an unpublished report).



*The Diversity Wheel**

Gardenswartz & Rowe (1994) *Diverse Teams at Work*. Irwin Professional Publishing. Internal Dimensions and External Dimensions are adapted from Marilyn Loden and Judy Rosener, *Workforce America!* (Business One Irwin, 1991).

Tips for Attracting and Engaging Diverse Community Members in Community Building:

* Diversity Wheel Courtesy of Gardenswartz & Rowe (1994) *Diverse Teams at Work*. Irwin Professional Publishing. Internal Dimensions and External Dimensions are adapted from Marilyn Loden and Judy Rosener, *Workforce America!* (Business One Irwin, 1991).

Definition of Diversity: Refers to the unique and identifiable characteristics that all of us possess that distinguish us as individuals and identify the groups we belong to. Diversity is a concept that includes notions of class, disability, ethnicity, family, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and other characteristics.

Take stock of who lives and works in the neighbourhood; learning about who lives in the area will help you determine who needs support or help connecting with the NH.

Recruit volunteers and/or staff that reflect the neighbourhood diversity and who speak the different languages found in the neighbourhood to help with outreach.

Embed valuing diversity in the NH mission and vision.

Equally value people's different abilities; everyone has something to offer and there are endless ways of getting involved. By treating all community members as equal contributors, people will feel they have an important role to play in the community.

Reflect positive images of people of diverse identities in the NH facility and in communica-

tion materials such as promotional posters.

Welcome immigrants and refugees: translate communication materials such as posters and pamphlets into the major languages in the area. Many NHs have the word "welcome" translated into different languages and put on the door or windows of the NH.

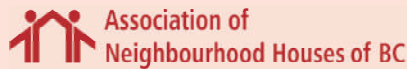
Remove physical barriers to accessing the facility: install a wheelchair ramp, firm handrails, a handicap access button on doors and a wheelchair accessible washroom. **Grants** may be available for these upgrades.

Build relationships with local first nations and urban aboriginals. Acknowledging traditional territory and opening the NH space for aboriginal people to gather and participate as staff, volunteers and community partners.

Be respectful of the voice of the youth and treat them as equal participants. Invite youth to be a part of the decision making process and become involved on the **board of directors**. Communicate with youth using methods familiar to them: Facebook and Twitter are a few examples.

"Resources for the NH are modest we have little space and money for programs so we use simple things to affect change. An inherent sense of beauty and fun inspires what the NH does. The reality of the Downtown Eastside is harsh so we incorporate whimsy in our activities –the NH has started a Harmonica Club - this is not as dependent upon space and it can fit into people's pockets for transporting an instrument - everyone can do it if you can breathe!"
Executive Director, Downtown East Side NH.

Sample diversity statement:



Statement of Diversity

- We are children, youth, adults and seniors of all races, all religions, all cultures, all abilities and all economic levels
- We speak many languages
- We are men and women of all sexual orientations
- We value diversity
- We endeavour to reflect the diversity of our neighbourhoods in our membership, our Boards of Management, our volunteers and our staff
- We respect all our neighbours
- We expect that all who come to our Houses, all those who provide or receive our services, will extend the same respect to all those they meet here
- Therefore, we will act to promote the inclusion of all in our Association and in our community

Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House (DTES NH): A Case Study

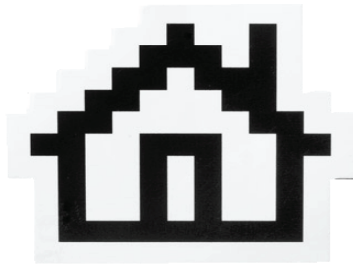
The grassroots, secular **Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House** (DTES NH) began its programming in May 2005, directed by a Steering Committee of 27 community members and mentoring from **Gordon NH**. The DTES NH embraces people of all ancestries, genders and ages. It is in Vancouver's downtown core where 70% of residents are low-income, 1000 are homeless and 5,000 underhoused. Diabetes, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, substance dependency and food insecurity are common place. The NH attempts to do its part to dismantle the poverty mentality and its handmaiden the charity model, as the first stigmatizes vulnerable populations and the latter is not sustainable.

For more information visit dteshouse.ca

During its first 2 years of operation, the DTES NH's quandary was how to offer programming while having no physical locale and only 1 part time staff. To conduct meaningful community consultation and create momentum, volunteers offered programs across the community, thereby reaching an ever-widening member population. Now housed in two storefronts with multiple staff, the DTES NH remains dedicated to continuing to provide off-site programming.

Programming is designed to encompass the needs of all literacy levels and is free of charge. On offer is everything from a **Family Drop In** to **Leadership Development** to **Environmental Justice**. The inventiveness of the **Harmonica Club** attracts all as harmonicas are portable and if you draw breath, you can play. Sensitive to media sensationalism, DTES residents are intensely aware of the outside 'gaze' on the community and Media Workshops on how to control the message or deflect unwanted attention remain popular.

Those who built the DTES NH put the **Right to Food** at the heart of the organization as nutritional vulnerability was a familiar theme to all. Among its many creative, low-tech nutritional initiatives is the **Roving Community Kitchen**, a blender-based mobile workshop which attracts hundreds of people for whom traditional Community Kitchens hold no allure. The overarching nutritional work of the NH is focused in the **DTES Kitchen Tables Project**, in partnership with the Potluck Café Society. The goal of the DTES Kitchen Tables Project is to reform the nutritional impact, quality, abundance and delivery of food in the DTES in consultation with stakeholders including residents, community food providers, non-food community organizations, healthcare professionals, policy makers, growers/suppliers, food/beverage industry professionals and researchers. As of August 2010, the DTES Kitchen Tables Project is mid way through Phase 2 with seed funding from local/federal governments, multiple foundations and businesses. Its future trajectory is based on a Community Economic Development model, designed to create employment for DTES residents living with multiple barriers. For more information visit <http://potluckcatering.org/dtes-kitchen-tables-project/>



Practical Steps for Connecting with Residents:

1. Community outreach: Connect one to one with neighbours

The best way to understand your neighbourhood is to get out there and meet your neighbours! By simply getting out into the community and talking to people, you can create a connection and find out what the concerns of your neighbourhood are.

"When I first started I went to a number of kitchen tables, I went to people's homes, I did cold calls where I would go to a housing co-op and ask if I could speak to different people." Collingwood NH.

"We have to find creative approaches to reaching out to people living in the inner city. We started "Banana Beat" - an outreach on welfare cheque day. We went to the line ups outside welfare offices and offered a banana to people providing a nutritious snack while they waited. Thus giving us an opportunity to advertise the NH and ask what types of programs people wanted to see - we became known as the 'banana people'". Executive Director, Downtown Eastside NH.

2. Asset mapping: getting people involved in identifying community assets

Asset mapping is a tool for getting people of all ages involved in identifying positive features of the neighbourhood. The map provides visual information about community **resources** and serves as a foundation for planning community improvements. **Asset mapping** is a great tool for **community development** because it engages people in learning about and shaping their own community.

*"By engaging 20 youth in an **asset mapping** project with a facilitator, they were able to connect with other youth and youth-specific organizations in the community. The mapping resulted in a booklet identifying youth friendly spaces and services providing youth with invaluable life skills through the process". Executive Director, Kitsilano NH.*

3. Community forums or dialogues

Invite people to come together and share their stories and ideas for enhancing community life. Develop an action plan that harnesses local knowledge, expertise and resources.

"When the mill closed down in the community, the neighbourhood life started to disintegrate. We called a community meeting to discuss our idea for a neighbourhood house as a way to start addressing community issues. The community came up with priorities that they could all get behind. They identified the biggest problem was to engage youth who had started vandalizing property. We started a youth project with help from people in the neighbourhood."
Executive Director, Cowichan NH.

4. Resident advisory committees

Form an advisory committee made up of local residents who guide, support and provide feedback on the activities of the organization

"The federal government gave the City of Vancouver some money to improve neighbourhoods. A group of residents were engaged in identifying the needs of the community. Some of the residents had come from areas where there were already Neighbourhood Houses, so they proposed the concept, formed a committee and were basically the people who got it started..."
Executive Director, Little Mountain NH.

2. Initiate a joint program to fill a recognized gap

By talking with other community groups and organizations you can identify a need in the community and develop a partnership with another organization to coordinate running a program together. This is a great way to build community relationships.

*"A **community kitchen** idea for single parents came up at a community meeting at the local school so we stepped forward to take on that project. Things can happen like this, an idea is presented and we come up and say, 'we can do this'. The same thing happened with the day camp: the school needed a camp and they needed a society to run it, so we managed that. People then begin to see the NH as willing to help out – someone they can go to for assistance."*
Executive Director, South Burnaby NH.



Troubleshooting

Throughout this Toolkit we have presented some potential barriers and challenges you may face and ways to navigate these difficult situations.

Troubleshooting: community building challenges to watch for...

Problem: Other organizations may feel threatened by your presence in the community.

Solution: Educate others about the role of NHs. Emphasize the goal of working with existing organizations, complementing existing services, and building community connections to address unmet needs. If tensions arise it may be productive to bring the two boards together and talk about ways to work together.

Practical Steps for Connecting with Local Organizations

1. Join meetings to get your presence known

Get out there! The more meetings you go to, the greater your networks and connections will become.

"Board members and I attend lots of community meetings, joining committees so that other service providers and organizations learn about the neighbourhood house. The meetings help us learn about where services are needed and how we can work with other groups to fill gaps."
Program Coordinator, Oak Avenue NH.

Problem: The community members disagree about the direction for the NH.

Solution: Working with people from different backgrounds means people have different views and ideas. You have to learn how to allow people to disagree respectfully and encourage them to stay in the conversation. Allowing people to bring different views to the table and being open to hearing them is rewarding when a common ground is finally discovered.



Helpful Resources and Links for Building Community:

www.crenyc.org

Community Building Resource Exchange

This website provides a broad array of information and resources on community building and neighbourhood improvement strategies.

www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Service Canada

This Service Canada website publication provides an introduction to community development and capacity building.

www.comm-dev.org

Community Development Society

This website has an extensive publications section with various articles on community development.

www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au

Community Building NSW

Community Building NSW provides you with links to understanding your community; evaluating the needs of a community and how to link up with other organizations.

tamarackcommunity.ca

Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement

This Institute develops and supports collaborative strategies with citizens and organizations. Based in a Canadian context, the site offers various resources from online articles

about community engagement, to recipes for a **community kitchen**.

www.abcdinstitute.org

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute

This site discusses the theory made popular by founders John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann. The theory challenges traditional approaches to **community development** by looking at the assets of the community to sustain and develop neighbourhoods.

www.citizenshandbook.org

The Citizen's Handbook

This site provides practical assistance on community organizing. The site has links and various library resources specific to Vancouver as well as seminal articles on community input.



Section 2: Governance and Organizational Development



Section 2: Governance and Organizational Development

- A vision, mission and action plan helps guide development
- NHs usually incorporate as a **non-profit** organization
- NHs are governed by a committee or an elected board made up of people based in the neighbourhood
- The role of board members will change as the organization develops
- Policies and procedures guide activities and help manage volunteers and staff
- Implementing systems for documenting activities demonstrates NH's worth to funders and supporters
- Securing a store-front location establishes the NH as a public gathering place

Getting Started with Organization Building

After a community group builds interest within the neighbourhood in starting a NH, the group starts putting structures in place to build an organization. The NH requires a decision making structure that puts power in the hands of the local community. Therefore, a committee or board of directors composed of people living and/or working in the local area served is created to govern the NH. Sometimes developing governance and organizational structures such as a board of directors and setting policies is the last thing that people think of when starting a NH. However, building a strong foundation will help develop and sustain the NH over the long term. The good news is that developing a structure for the organization and starting community programs happen at the same time.

"I found that a lot of volunteers do not like setting up systems and forms, they don't want to do this, they want to give love and receive it back...I had to explain that they can't get into this though until the business is running."
Program Coordinator, Oak Avenue NH.

Steps for Building Neighbourhood House Structure:

Step 1: Vision, Goals and Strategic Plan: Ready, Set... ACTION!

The group forming a NH operates as a committee until they take the step to incorporate as a **non-profit** society and form a **board of directors** (see p.22 on forming a board of directors) who will continue to develop and create the overall goals of the NH. The committee's first organizational steps are to:

- **Develop their vision and mission** making sure to include and reflect the diverse local community.
- Learn about the unique **philosophy and roles** that NHs play in communities.
- Discuss **principles and values** to follow in order to guide the direction of the NH.
- **Create conversations or dialogues** for community input, tapping into people's creativity to dream about a vision for a NH. Ideas for activities will bubble up from community and new relationships will

develop through the process.

- **Start an activity plan** that brings people together, tapping into where their energy is.
- Creating your **mission and vision statements** will lead to the development of a **Strategic Plan** (overarching visioning plan for your organization) which then leads to the **Operational Plan** (a "how-to" plan).

"In our first month, we pulled all of the players together from the community who had been working on our strategy and we brought in a facilitator and we spent two days in creating a set of core values that has guided our development and been incorporated into our mission throughout. We spent a lot of time creating ownership around these values and now it is ingrained in what we do." Collingwood NH.

What is the difference between a vision and a mission statement?

A **vision statement** declares what you want to

achieve in the long run: what is the future envisioned by your NH? These are the highest goals that you hope to reach. The vision may change as the community changes. A **mission statement** defines who you are and what you do. The mission is the work that you are currently doing in the community. The mission usually remains the same over time.

Vision and mission statements are important in that they drive the work of the NH. Knowing what you want and what you are working towards will help you reach your goals.

Where would you use these statements?

1. Your website and/or NH literature (brochures, etc.)
2. In your NH to inspire staff and participants
3. In your Strategic Plan
4. In your Grants or Funding Applications
5. To inspire long-term vision through changes in staff, volunteers, members and participants



Association of
Neighbourhood Houses of BC

ANHBC Mission Statement

- We are a volunteer driven, community service agency.
- Our mission is to make neighbourhoods better places to live.
- Our goal is to enable people to embrace their lives and strengthen their communities.
- Our challenge is to work with communities to develop innovative programs and services that meet the changing needs of a diverse population.



Association of
Neighbourhood Houses of BC

ANHBC Vision Statement

To create vibrant, active communities, empowered to play an active role in civil society and supported by their neighbours and community organizations to live healthy, full lives.

Strategic Planning

As the NH starts to grow it will benefit from having a more formal **strategic plan**, linking the mission and vision with broad strategic directions. **The strategic plan** is a blueprint for guiding the organization's development. (See Section 5: Programs and Evaluations as these provide important sources of information when working on strategic planning)

Steps for strategic planning:

- 1) Review the NH mission, vision, principles and values*
- 2) Identify changes, strengths and challenges in the NH internal environment*
- 3) Identify social trends, strengths and challenges in the external environment*
- 4) Brainstorm directions for the NH to take over the next 1-5 years in the context of the realities identified in the environment*
- 5) Plan specific implementation strategies and priorities for action*
- 6) Create an operational plan detailing how to proceed with measurable goals and objectives (specifying who, what, when and where)*

Operational Planning

Once you have developed a strategic plan, the next step will be the development of an Operational Plan. This plan will address how we implement the **strategic plan**. It is the "action" plan which will address the logistical realities of enacting the broader vision.

Step 2: Forming a Board of Directors

A volunteer **board of directors** is responsible for governing a **non-profit** organization and ensuring that the financial and legal obligations of the society are met. The **board of directors**

is elected by, and accountable to its community members. The board reports the organization's activities and finances to its members at an annual general meeting. (See Volunteers Section for additional volunteer information).

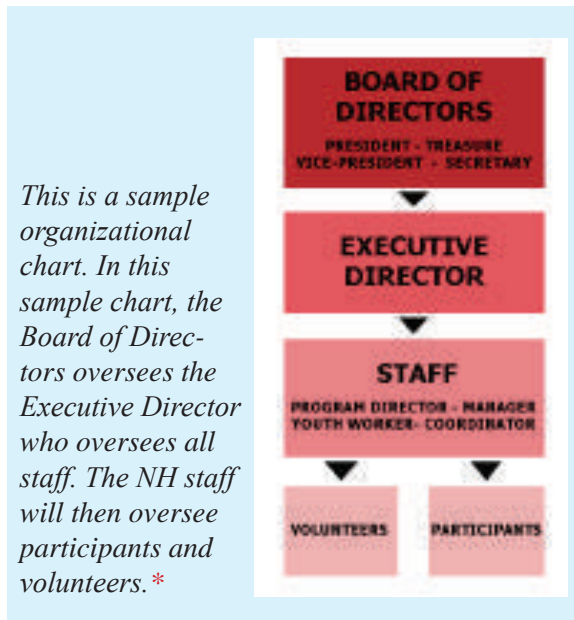
A NH board should ideally come from the local neighbourhood. Sometimes people from outside the neighbourhood are recruited as board members to bring additional knowledge and skills needed to help the organization meet its goals. For example, a lawyer or accountant maybe brought in from outside the neighbourhood if volunteers with these skills sets are not available in the immediate area. A reflective board that is aware of the community's issues and strengths will help navigate the NH.

The members of the **Board of Directors** all assume different roles to ensure that the organization adheres to all of it's responsibilities. Committees of the **Board of Directors** may also be formed to help the Board make decisions on important matters (i.e. finance, personnel, marketing, etc). Committees can assist with the development of specific policies. A **Board of Directors** will generally have similar types of positions and will include the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary as the primary roles. The President or Chair provides leadership and direction and supervises other Directors in the execution of their roles. The Vice-President assumes responsibility in the absence of the President. The Treasurer oversees the organization's finances and the Secretary ensures all Secretarial functions are performed by the Board.

Board members should learn about their roles and be prepared to see them change as the organization develops **resources**. In the early stage of a NH, the board is more involved in the day-to-day running of the organization. The board runs the programs supporting other volunteers in their roles until the resources can be found to hire staff. Once staff are hired, roles will change with the Executive Director overseeing the day-to-day operations of the NH. The relationship between the **Board of Directors** and the Executive Director is a very important one as this will help guide and achieve the goals of the NH.

Organizational Chart:

An organizational chart is a diagram that shows the structure of an organization and the relationships of the positions and jobs. Below is an example of a basic organizational chart for a NH.



Board training should be available to board members from the beginning. Many resources exist to help board members understand their roles and develop their skills and knowledge. Including **succession planning** into the mandate for your board will help keep new people coming into the organization. Succession planning refers to overlapping experienced board members still involved, transferring the history and knowledge of the organization forward and assisting new board members.

Troubleshooting: Governance and Organizational Challenges to Watch for....

Problem: Board members have different ideas about what the neighbourhood house priorities should be... How do you encourage board members to develop shared vision and goals?

Possible Solution: Undertake creative group visioning exercises using a tool such as **Appreciative Inquiry (AI)**** that encourages people to work together and build on the strengths, skills and experiences of the people in the group. Co-creating a vision leads to shared ownership and commitment to working together.

Originally founded by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva, the Appreciative Inquiry approach is grounded in a four step process:

1. **Discover:** Identifying what is currently working well.
2. **Dream:** Identify what would work well in the future.
3. **Design:** Plan ideas and actions to ensure this works.
4. **Deliver/Destiny:** Implementing these proposed ideas.

To learn more about Appreciative Inquiry (AI), visit these helpful sites:

www.abcdinstitute.org
www.iisd.org/ai/locating.htm



Helpful Links for Board Development:

Finding Board Members: Look for board members who share your vision and passion for creating a sense of community through the development of a NH.

www.boardmatch.org

Is an excellent resource for finding board members and the site also contains information on

www.wildrosefoundation.ca

This Canadian website is dedicated to Board Development providing tools and resources for non-profit Boards.

* Basic Organizational Chart for Neighbourhood House

** Reference for AI: Jane Watkins and Bernard Mohr, "AI History and Timeline." Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination, 01 May 2005, appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu/intro/timeline.cfm



Tips for Creating a Successful Board of Directors:

Develop strong relationships within the board and with staff – open, transparent communication is the key to a Board's success.

Focus on core values/mission in decision making.

Work together on the vision and action plan for the NH.

Clearly define roles and redefine them as the organization grows.

Identify ethical and legal responsibilities of the board.

Set board term limits to ensure that you have a renewal process.

Build a succession plan – how will old board members mentor new ones?

www.cga-ontario.org/assets/file/publication_grassroots_governance.pdf

“Grassroots Governance: Governance and the Non-Profit Sector,” written by CGA Ontario, is a guidebook to better orient and assist volunteers in understanding their role in good governance and to aid **grassroots** organizations as they grow and mature. This publication outlines the roles and responsibilities of **non-profit board of directors** and outlines where to start in organizing and structuring your board.

www7.governancematters.org

This American website provides an extensive list of resources, an online library and various helpful links. An interactive “ask the experts” section answers people’s questions and concerns around governance-related issues.

www.amcnposolutions.com

A Practical Guide to Governing your volunteer organization by Tom Abbott, Association Management Consultants Inc.

Step 3: Incorporating as a Non-Profit Society

In Canada, a NH is usually incorporated as a **non-profit** society with registered charitable status. Each province in Canada has different procedures and both provincial and federal government rules apply. In British Columbia, a NH can easily incorporate as a provincially registered **non-profit** society without gaining federal government charitable status. (The guidelines are found on the B.C. government website.) Consult with a lawyer to help build the NH **constitution** and **bylaws** and prepare the application to become a society or registered charity.

Constitution and Bylaws

A **constitution** establishes the fundamental principles and broad structure of an organization. Bylaws outline the rules and procedures for an organization. **Bylaws** can be a useful tool for your board in order to outline the rights and responsibilities of all board members.

Operating as a provincially registered **non-profit** society opens up many funding opportunities and gives legitimacy to the new NH. However, if the NH wants to give charitable tax receipts for donations and be eligible for the full range of funding sources, obtaining registered charity status is necessary. Be patient, it can take a few years to get charitable status. It may be possible to obtain sponsorship from another NH or another registered charity that can help acquire funding on your behalf while you wait.

"We formed a committee, we kept meeting and decided it was time to register as a society, so we had a meeting and each threw in \$5 because it cost \$25 to incorporate as a society. After our board formed, when I came across somebody who was familiar with neighbourhood houses and they lived in the area I would bring them in to build involvement on the planning committee and the board. During the early years after incorporating we met many challenges but we persevered and supported each other to carry on." Executive Director, South Burnaby NH.



Helpful Links to Resources for Organization and Governance:

How do you become a charitable organization?

Canada Revenue Agency - www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/chrts/menu-eng.html

This site provides basic guidelines for maintaining charitable registration and a checklist of items pertaining to ensuring charitable status.

Do you want to incorporate?

BC Registry Services - <http://www.bcregistry-services.gov.bc.ca/bcreg/corppg/societies/crchecksoc.page>

Here you will find information for incorporation of a society in British Columbia. A checklist is provided and outlines all of the items you will need for incorporation.

Step 4: Legal Arrangements: Leasing Space and Insurance

Many NHs may start operating from locations within partner community organizations. Explore support from your local municipal government for space. Obtaining a storefront allows the NH to have full autonomy and to gain the visibility needed to fulfill its mandate as a neutral community gathering space that is welcoming to people of all faiths and backgrounds.

Lease agreements for facility space are legal documents that should be carefully interpreted and understood prior to being signed. A three year lease is preferred because this stability will be a positive signal to funders and allows for continuity in the community. Insurance will be necessary to cover loss or damage to property contents and personal liability.

"I would recommend a three year lease...even applying for grants, they won't give it to you if there is no sense of continuity. It's painful because you can't apply for anything until you have your leasing problems settled but it takes money to obtain a lease and pay rent."
Program Coordinator, Oak Avenue NH.

Step 5: Systems and Policies for Administration and Risk Management

Systems for recording NH activities will help make a case for funding. Tracking things such as attendance in activities, volunteer hours and stories of community change demonstrates the importance of the NH to the neighbourhood.

Policies and procedures give direction to staff and volunteers for how to abide by the rules and reflect the values of the organization. As the board develops its policies, questions will arise about how the organization will operate within its values base. These discussions can be an exciting opportunity to develop the ethical foundation for NH activities.

For new NHs, policies should also be developed to reflect applicable legislation and for managing basic safety risks; for example, children's program volunteers may be required by law to have criminal record checks and you may require volunteer drivers to have and demonstrate a clear driving record by submitting a driver's abstract. Different jurisdictions have unique requirements, research the applicable government acts regulating employers and service providers in your area. Policies ensuring basic liability insurance covering board members and other volunteers are also necessary.

"For us, we decided that we were a non-smoking, no alcohol organization and that our driver's all had to have First Response emergency training and once we had all these things in place we realized that we could save \$400 per year on insurance simply for having these policies." Executive Director, Cowichan NH

Criminal record checks: Do we need?

Criminal record checks are an important part of any **risk management** strategy for screening and managing volunteers and staff. However, criminal record checks have limitations and are not a guarantee of good character. They should be complemented by other screening and monitoring steps such as conducting recruitment interviews, contacting references and providing supervision.

NHs work with vulnerable populations and criminal record checks may help ensure the safety of participants. Failure to take this step may subject the NH to liability for negligence should an incident occur. In addition to jeopardizing the well being of staff and participants, an incident may also tarnish the reputation of the NH. Requiring criminal record checks reassures the public that proper precautions are being taken for their safety. Information about criminal record check procedures can be found at your local police station.



Helpful links for Risk Management and Liability Issues:

What sorts of liability issues do I need to know about? Although no replacement for proper legal consultation, these websites help to educate nonprofits about risk management.

www.ourcommunity.com.au

This is an excellent starting point for **risk management** assessment before approaching an insurer and/or a lawyer.

www.carters.ca/pub/checklst/nonprofit.pdf

For an in depth look at identification and management of risk, this website provides a comprehensive list.

Section 3: Building Partnerships



Section 3:

Building Partnerships

- A first step in the development of a NH is forming partnerships
- Pooled assets (**resources**) make it possible to expand the work of the NH and multiply benefits for the community
- Partnerships allow a NH to prove itself, reduce competition and build collaborative networks
- There are a number of ways to create mutually beneficial partnerships
- Partnerships can be helpful for delivering services or addressing a community or social issue



Why Do Neighbourhood Houses Build Partnerships?

Forming partnerships is one of the first steps taken when starting a NH. NHs play a unique role in creating partnerships in that they address a range of community issues by working with different population groups in the neighbourhood. Partnerships result in countless community initiatives from pooling **resources** to strengthening community network ties between residents, local interest groups, businesses and institutions. Organizing partnerships is a vital **community development** role that results in a broad base of visibility and support for the NH.

*"We fit into the community in a unique way because where many of the other organizations focus on one area, we touch on a lot of areas and because we operate as a hub we can connect people with a variety of services at our NH or somewhere else in the community."
Program Coordinator, Oak Avenue NH.*

Steps for Building Strong Partnerships

- Identify the mutual benefits of working together
- Discuss each partner's roles and contribution
- Identify limits to the partnership and potential conflict of values or mandate
- Discuss the best way to handle any challenges
- Create an agreement that captures the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- Plan to evaluate the partnership after a defined period of time
- Agree on a process for ending the partnership

Types of Partnerships

Partnerships look different for every NH, reflecting the unique assets and needs of the local community. Typically, partnerships are created with the following:

- Public services (such as libraries, schools, recreation centres)
- Health centres, community policing, community-based organizations (such as faith groups)
- Community services, residents groups, arts/culture groups, environmental and anti-poverty **advocacy** groups
- Businesses or service groups (such as Lions or Rotary clubs)

1. Build a reciprocal relationship with another service organization.

This relationship encourages mutual exchange of information and referrals helping to serve a target population group. These connections help get the word out to the community about the work of the NH.

"We also work really closely with the Surrey Food Bank, so they help us post information on focus groups that we want to reach, such as low income families. The Food Bank used to deal with baby stuff, but shifted focus towards strictly food items. They found out about our Clothes Closet project and they started to channel baby items to us right away. As long as the communication stays open then we can support each other and we won't lose resources."
Executive Director, Oak Avenue NH.

2. Partner with an organization that has a skill set that is needed to bridge gaps in the NH resources.

"In a partnership with the Canadian Diabetes Association, the NH provides the space and participants for two different programs. Canadian Diabetes Association provides a facilitator who comes into the NH to lead a food security program that provides cooking classes for new immigrants to Canada as well as another cooking program for people on social assistance."
Executive Director, Gordon NH.

3. Form or become part of a network of service providers.

Talk to other organizations in the community to see if a network of service organizations exists; if not, start one by bringing organizations together. At a services network meeting organizations share knowledge about community and provide updates about their programs and other resources. The NH looks for partnership opportunities offering to take the lead with other organizations.

The Windows of Opportunity Coalition established in 1997, is a unique broad based coalition of over 55 community and public, child, youth and family serving agencies in Vancouver, that is committed to a universal, comprehensive, "prevention oriented" approach to supporting healthy child, youth and family development. Information is shared between the organizations.
vancouverwindowsofopportunity.com

4. Join the local Board of Trade or Rotary and make connections with service clubs in your area.

Service clubs such as the Lions, Kiwanis or the Legion provide good connections with the business community in the neighbourhood. The relationship you build will be mutually beneficial as you can help them meet their service mandate through your local community connections. As a result, the NH is viewed as part of the business community.

"Being a member of the Rotary Club enabled me to connect with businesses who wanted to do something good in the community and they wanted to know how they could help. The 'Coats for Kids' project was a big project that we started and the Rotary Club now owns and manages that program and we link them up with kids that need these services."
Executive Director, South Burnaby NH.

5. Build a partnership with organizations or groups that have free program space or provide space at the NH for groups that can offer a free service.

Facility and service costs are reduced for the partners and services are provided in a variety of accessible community locations.

"Many NHs have partnerships with public schools. Partnerships are developed through building relationships with the school administrator. A school may be willing to donate space for NH programs serving children and families connected to the school. The partner-

ship allows the NH to bring programs close to where people live and schools become valued as a community hub for families.

Homework clubs, youth leadership, early child development programs, ESL classes, and licensed child care are examples of NH programming held in schools.”

Executive Director, Frog Hollow NH.

6. Create a multi-service hub at the NH with other community organizations or government services sharing the cost of the facility.

Facility costs are shared and the community has access to a full range of services integrated in one stop.

“SVNH operates as a community hub. Several organizations rent permanent offices or program space in the building: including government social workers, mental health and community organizations serving immigrant families, seniors and aboriginal families. Program participants have access to all the NH opportunities in addition to the service provided by the other organizations.”

Executive Director, South Vancouver NH.

7. Develop a partnership to create new community development opportunities that connect people in the neighbourhood and build community skills.

“North Shore NH was asked by the city to help deal with a challenge related a community garden next to the NH. The NH helped to end conflict between two groups by getting everyone to work together on the project. Now the garden has some plots designated to grow food for the NH kitchen. The garden association came up with the idea.... BINGO they get it... the garden is about working together to benefit the community. Actually seeing community engagement in action allows people to understand what it is.”

Executive Director, North Shore NH.

8. Partner with local residents who have a skill to offer the community.

Cultivate leadership roles in community members who may be willing to provide a program for community members at the NH or other community space.

“We got funding for a **mentoring** program for immigrant seniors and it enabled us to do **mentoring** and build capacity with key leaders in the community, and they began to implement programming that they wanted to see at the NH on a volunteer basis. We now have an 81 year old Vietnamese volunteer who does line dancing and it was so successful we had to cap it off at 60 people! One of his students also does volunteer teaching and teaches the beginner class”

Executive Director, Mount Pleasant NH.

9. Partner with community policing to build community relationships with local law enforcement.

Police may be viewed with suspicion and even fear by some in the neighbourhood. By involving police in community events they become part of the community and viewed as real people. When police understand the role of the NH in the community they may be able to include the NH as an alternative to law enforcement solutions.

“The RCMP said that the biggest nightmare was Halloween so they asked us to sponsor a night for Halloween and we have done that, and the crime rate and vandalism went way down. Now what the RCMP do is they come into town for coffee and if they find any kids that are acting up they say, ‘we can escort you home or we can take you to the NH’”.

Executive Director, Cowichan NH.

10. Partner with an advocacy organization to address a social issue affecting the neighbourhood.

The NH is aware of the gaps in the community

and sometimes the gaps go beyond the scope of the local neighbourhood. Joining a campaign led by an **advocacy** group provides an opportunity for local people to be involved in broader social change. The voice of a few is multiplied by joining with others in a common cause.

*A NH hosted a broad based coalition to develop creative solutions related to street level sex trade in the City of Vancouver. The **coalition** included NHs, sex trade **advocacy** organizations, sex trade workers, police, city planners, and business associations. A report 'Living in Community' was published from this work.*

"The youth program at South Vancouver NH involves 11 different practicum students. Nursing students run a group for girls, recreations students help with after school programs, social service worker students help with the youth program at the BC housing site and a marketing student helped to come up with a new program promotion strategy. Without these students, the programs would be much smaller and the kids that don't have access to expensive recreation programs would be left out."
Executive Director, South Vancouver NH.

11. Partner with local artists and cultural organizations to support artists and engage the community in cultural events and community arts.

Arts and culture are a great way to include people in the neighbourhood and connect members of the community from different backgrounds.

"A resident from the Mohawk nation got this idea that he wanted to do a carving for his housing co-op as a welcome to the neighbourhood and he asked if we could help with this, so we looked for funding sources and were able to flow money through our organization to support it. It was completely organized by them, they found a senior carver and we talked about things we thought were important such as sharing the experience with the wider neighbourhood." Collingwood NH.

13. Partner with residents for enhancing or sustaining local amenities.

Partnering with community for advocacy around a local community issue can be an effective way of achieving community goals such as sustaining a threatened community asset.

"Our local community school was threatened with closure due to low enrolment so the NH partnered with concerned parents and rallied to keep the school open. The two groups collaborated creating a new service model proposal for presentation to the School Board. The School Board accepted the proposal. By focusing on a common goal and always reflecting back on the mission of the partnership, the group was able to successfully keep the school open. The parents could not have done this alone and we could not have done this alone- together, we were a force greater than the sum of our two parts".
Executive Director, Frog Hollow NH.

12. Partner with educational institutions for student placements.

Students from schools of social work, recreation, marketing, planning, counseling, nursing, fine arts/design and business all need places for students to gain practical skills. The benefits are mutual as the NH benefits from the service they provide and the students learn about how the NH works in community – knowledge they will take with them in their future careers.

14. Partnership supporting an autonomous neighbourhood group.

By supporting the development of a new community organization, the NH builds the capacity of the **grassroots** community to fill a local need.

"A Family Resource Program located at the NH was started by a group of parents in the community. As the program started and struggled, there was talk of the NH taking on the program. However, remaining true to the NH community

capacity building philosophy, rather than absorb the program the NH built skills and guided the group to ensure that they could stand on their own. The group has subsequently become its own legal entity, sustaining itself and working in partnership with the NH in the community."

Executive Director, Alexandra NH.

Cowichan Neighbourhood House Association: A Case Study

The town of Chemainus was born of a booming logging industry, and was once economically supported by the local mill, but struggled to recover after it's closing. Founded in 1997, the Cowichan Neighbourhood House Association (CNHA) began as a result of several dedicated community members interested in harnessing the town's resources for community betterment. A town meeting was called in a church basement to discuss what the community wanted to see. The level of community engagement was such that the church basement was standing room only. Overwhelmingly it was agreed that there was a lack of activities for youth – leaving many to wander the streets, hitchhike to nearby towns, or to vandalize the town's prized murals. A group of youth who had attended the meeting voiced their opinion: they needed somewhere to go. The original members and volunteers of the NH came together and looked at the Neighbourhood House model. The group put together a proposal and subsequently created a mandate that has informed the mission and vision of the NH: 75% of what the organization does is youth-specific while the remaining 25% is community outreach.

Through the assistance of the municipality, the NH was given the town Fire Hall in which to operate at the cost of a dollar per month, although in a state of disrepair. The first challenge for the emerging NH was to come up with the money and labour required to make the building useable. CNHA has been able maintain a central location in Chemainus through the volunteer services of members of the community who have donated their time and energy in fixing up the space, running the programs and supporting the work of the NH. CNHA has faced some challenges in attempting to build up their NH in a rural setting. The main challenge for the NH has been to finding and securing funding to operate. The constraints of being entirely volunteer run have also proven challenging for the members of the NH. It is a testament to the dedication of the NH Board members and other volunteers who have kept the NH afloat despite the lack of resources. Early challenges included community members concerned that the CNHA would be competition instead of enrichment for existing institutions.

Community support for CNHA strengthened as the organization established itself, and now enjoys support from many institutions. One of the founding members of the NH specifically notes the support from the local RCMP, grateful for Cowichan's dedication to youth programs. The NH is seen as a positive support for community members, a "home away from home".

The organization has run for 14 years entirely with volunteer staff. It takes a whole community of truly dedicated people to sustain a volunteer run NH, and CNHA exists today because of the determination and vision of the community and all those who continue to offer their time and support.



Troubleshooting: Partnership Challenges to Watch for...

Problem: Partnerships can be very complex relationships. Sometimes different organizations have different goals, standards and visions – to name a few! How do you negotiate these relationships and avoid potential conflict?

Solution: Addressing potential conflicts early on can save you from lots of headaches down the road! Discuss goals and visions for the partnership and what you expect out of the relationship. Establish an agreement that identifies roles and responsibilities to make sure you are on the same page.

Problem: Often starting up a partnership and subsequent program with an established institution can present many barriers or challenges to work through. Institutions with a larger bureaucracy and large sets of rules and policies may not be responsive. How do you work through these barriers?

Solution: Develop the relationship gradually; it may be a new concept for the institution to work with a community organization.



- Have patience and explore both the opportunities and the limitations of the institution's roles in a potential partnership
- Build trust by building relationships within the institution; an internal champion can help “grease the wheels” and get results
- Develop formal partnership agreements that outline roles and responsibilities of the partnership so the staff of the institution can provide assurance of the project parameters and steps taken to minimize risk for liability



Helpful Resources and Links for Building Partnerships:

<http://www.culture.alberta.ca/community/resources-and-links/>

This toolkit is an excellent resource for strategies and steps needed to build and strengthen community through partnerships.

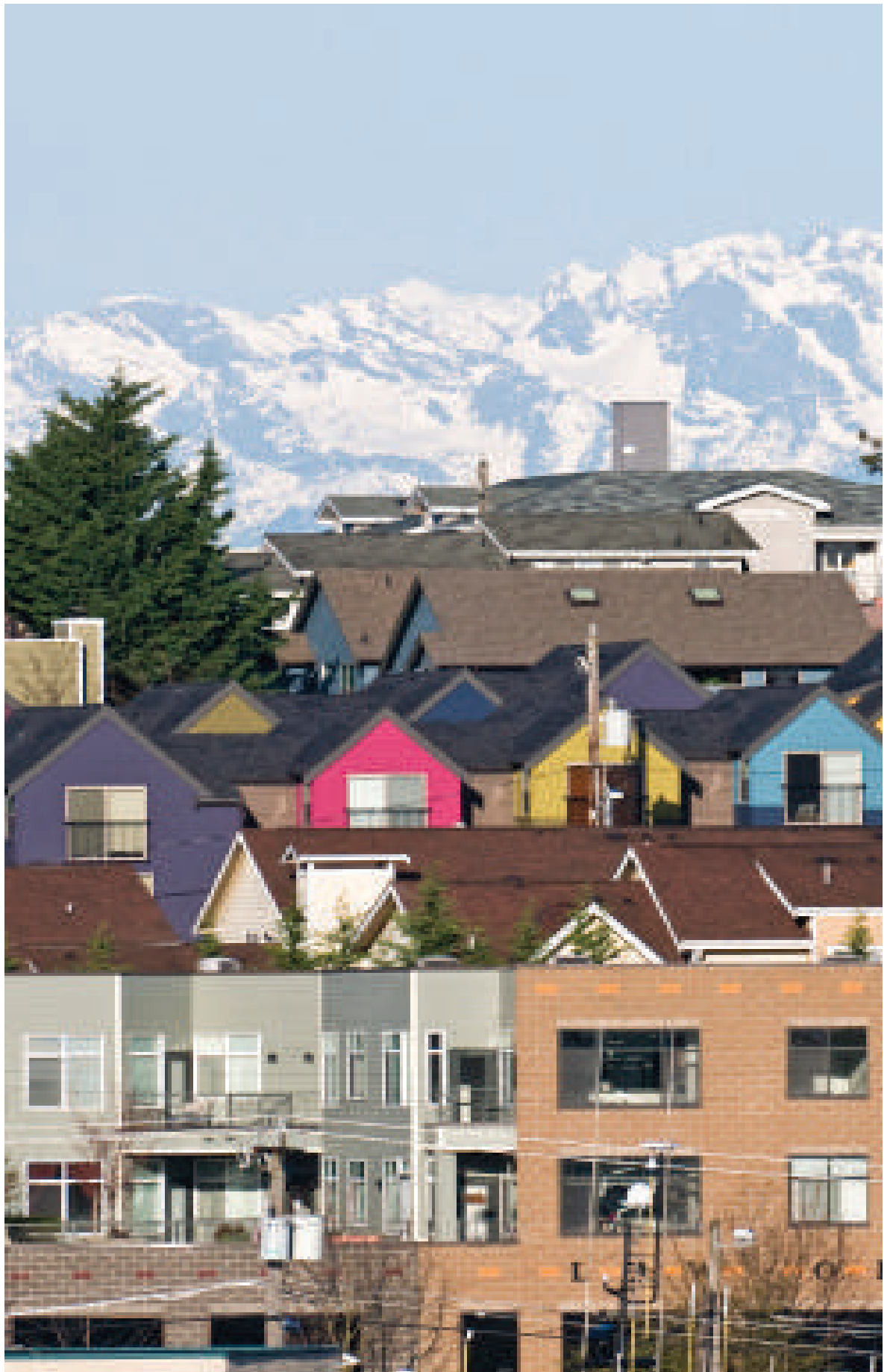
www.lawdepot.com

Sample Partnership rental agreements sample form.

Form also found at:

www.solidarec.com

Sample Partnership agreements form.



“Successful NHs report that funding capacity is built slowly over time and can take years to develop into a diverse and flexible funding package. Start to work within your means and slowly expand as opportunities arise.”

Section 4: Funding/ Resource Development



Section 4: Funding/ Resource Development

- "Resources" is a broad term used to describe all elements needed to run a Neighbourhood House
- Funding diversification is the best strategy to sustain NH activities
- Building a positive reputation/profile and developing relationships is the most important part of fund development
- There are a number of strategies employed for developing funds including holding fundraising events and writing **grants** and proposals



How Neighbourhood Houses Develop Funding/Resources

Funding and resource development is a constant focus for **grassroots** non-profits such as a NH. **Resources** can be summarized as everything needed to run a NH and its related activities. **Resources** include cash, staff, volunteers, facilities, equipment, partnerships, supplies, materials and operating procedures to name a few. All resources have a cash value and begin as cash revenue or a donation in-kind. This chapter will focus on fund development as the essential foundation for obtaining resources.

Fund development strategy is linked to the NH's mission, vision, and goals identified in the

strategic plan. Funding diversification is the best strategy to sustain a range of activities at the NH and to weather the ups and downs of funding cycles and shifting funder priorities. With its geographic focus and multiple program approach, a NH is well placed to develop a **diversified funding** base.

Building profile and developing relationships is the most important part of fund development. As outlined in the previous section, partnerships and in-kind (non-cash) contributions are a major resource for a NH that is developed through relationship building. Obtaining cash funding is also dependent upon relationships.

You can generate funding for your NH through various fundraising methods including writing **grants/proposals**, holding fundraising events, soliciting individual and corporate donors and **social enterprise.** Funding may be available through the United Way, community foundations, corporations, municipal, provincial and federal government sources. Carefully planned activities based on demonstrated community needs will make funding requests easier to pitch. Obtaining community support letters confirms community need, shows confidence in the NH and supports the project in need of funding.

Successful NHs report that **funding capacity is built slowly over time** and can take years to develop into a diverse and flexible funding package. Start to work within your means and slowly expand as opportunities arise.

"Another good tip is not building resources too fast. If you build too fast what happens is that you start to chase money and lose focus on the NH mission. Make it slow and intentional and develop good solid programs and partnerships."
Executive Director, Little Mountain NH.



Fund Development is tied to the values, mission and goals of the NH. The NH board must decide how to approach fund development and stay true to their mission.

1. Strategies for Funding /Resource Development:

South Burnaby Neighbourhood House (SBNH): A Case Study

South Burnaby Neighbourhood House (SBNH) began as a once a month event at a community church. Sponsoring community dinners, SBNH began with the goal of bringing people together from different cultures, generations and experiences. It was from these encounters, that the groundwork was built for a gathering place for the community – the Neighbourhood House.

Forming a society with a group of like-minded board members who understood what a NH was, the group began to look into funding opportunities to get started. One of the challenges they faced initially was getting a space to house the NH, and for the first three years they floated between borrowed spaces. Caught in the paradox of needing an address to obtain funding and funding to obtain an address, they survived by working closely with existing programs. Working with existing institutions not only helped SBNH get on their feet, but allowed them to network closely and provide complementary, not competitive programming. This allowed SBNH to be seen as an ally in the business community, and enabled them to form important partnerships early on. Partnering with other organizations, schools and businesses in the community has broadened and strengthened the work that SBNH does.

In the third year, a storefront was obtained as well as more sustainable funding opportunities. In an effort to facilitate making connections among community members, something often difficult in a suburban setting, SBNH positioned itself as a gathering place where people could sit and have coffee just to meet neighbours, and a storefront space greatly helped. SBNH also saw a strong need in the community for child care, they began a fee-based program which would build revenue and increase financial stability for the NH. SBNH worked closely with existing institutions and non-profits in order to fill a niche in the community, and enrich the existing services offered. SBNH was able to triple its capacity in 2004, by fragmenting from its small storefront to 6 satellite locations around Burnaby. One of the challenges experienced by SBNH has been finding a large enough space suitable for their growing needs.

One of the keys to the success of the South Burnaby Neighbourhood House has been the intentional strategy of building capacity one project at a time. Focusing on one program's success has led to the ability to manage and run a number of projects for the community and resulted in a thriving NH in the Burnaby community.

A. Soliciting local donations by building relationships

The first step for resource development is to build relationships with a broad cross-section of the community in order to integrate them into the NH activities. This integration strengthens the community and will help to sustain the NH over time because ownership and pride in the NH is shared. With their geographic focus, NHs rely on the "**barn-raising**" approach to resource development. This approach pools local resources and focuses on working together in order to achieve desired results.

The **barn-raising** approach develops mutual relationships between donors and the NH - the donor helps the NH and the NH helps the donor in return. Relationships are started by meeting one-to-one with local businesses and organizations, informing them about the NH and building meaningful connections. Invite businesses to be part of a project by making a cash or in-kind donation and include them in the event, offering public recognition in return for the donation. Reciprocate their involvement by shopping for goods and services in local shops.

Resource requests from the community could include:

- Asking for food donations from a local grocer
- Free service from a local carpenter
- A discount on art supplies from a local shop
- A local bank or credit union may provide a cash donation to sponsor an event or a program
- The local legion may fundraise on your behalf to help with a Christmas hamper program
- The local health centre may help to sell raffle tickets and promote or attend your fundraising event

"We sent staff (from the NH) to talk to businesses in the area and we had not one business say no in supporting us, and these were smaller shops and businesses, and that for me said, 'this resource development stuff really works', but it isn't about splashy events, it's the everyday relationships – if I want that business to support us, then we need to support that business."
Executive Director, North Shore NH.

B. Fundraising with community events

Fundraising events have multiple purposes: (1) they provide an opportunity for a broad cross-section of the community to get involved in their neighbourhood (2) they raise the NH profile and (3) they raise money. The variety of possible events is only limited by the imagination and the availability of upfront resources. Successful event organizing is time consuming so the revenue generated is maximized by recruiting volunteers to share the work and seeking as many in-kind donations to support the event as possible. Don't necessarily expect a large profit right away; build momentum with an annual event over time. Each year brings new sponsors and more participants as your event becomes known and something to look forward to in the community.

"The annual Community Carnival, involves the whole community and includes activities such as: a silent auction, a bake sale, activities and games for the kids, a flea market, a 50/50 draw, face painting, clowns and entertainment. Focusing our energy into one key fundraising event that engages the community was an essential ingredient in the success of the Community Carnival. We discovered that the key for making money was framing the event as a fundraising event rather than as a community event letting the community know that this is the one time of

year that NH solicits financial support. This shift resulted in substantial revenue gains, the event went from earning \$5000 per year to \$20,000 per year."
Executive Director, Cedar Cottage NH.

C. Building relationships with funding agencies

Making your case for funding stand out among the large number of needy organizations is essential for success. One to one communication with funders about the needs in your community, and the work of the NH to meet those needs is an important foundation to build. Building direct and ongoing relationships with the funder helps you get your message across and gives you the opportunity to understand the funder's priorities. Finding a fit between your needs and the funder's interests lays the groundwork for successful **grants** and proposals.

Being able to show funders tangible evidence of the value of a program and the information gathered from the community such as asset maps and reports, will increase your profile and provide evidence to support the case for funding your organization

"Kits House struggled with a lost funding base for a few years. Re-building relationships and talking about what we are doing and letting funders such as the City and the Provincial Government know what we had been up to was key. We were able to create a profile and create relationships that got us back on track."
Executive Director, Kitsilano NH.

Building a reciprocal approach to a relationship with a funder will assist you in gaining allies with the funder. Volunteering to assist the funder with a fundraising campaign or acting on an advisory committee will build mutual relationships. Joining the board of trade and supporting their events builds connections with some of the members who may help the NH. Funder recognition and inclusion in NH activities shows appreciation and makes them feel part of the community.

D. Grant writing

Every jurisdiction has a unique collection of funders who may support the role of a NH in the community. There are large data bases available that list the names of funders supporting the **non-profit** sector. It is worth mining these to look for opportunities that suit your project. Funders have grant deadlines that must be met. If the timing works, call the grant agent to determine how your project fits with their goals. This conversation begins a relationship that will bring attention to your application when it is submitted. Some of the most common non-government sources of funding include:

- United Way and Foundations
- Financial institutions (Banks and Credit Unions)
- Utility companies such as hydro and telecommunications

Funders are inundated with funding requests. Therefore, clearly written **grants** that are aligned with funder's goals and demonstrate community need and the NH's competency in managing funding and delivering programs is essential. As the NH begins to develop its reputation by demonstrating that it is providing service to the community, the opportunity to obtain **grants** to expand its activities becomes more likely.

Some foundations and granting agencies are willing to supply start up funding when the NH can demonstrate how their funding will build capacity of the NH and contribute to its long-term sustainability. If a grant requires charitable status before you have charitable status, another organization might be willing to sponsor your project and act as a go-between with the funder.

Most granting agents want proof of the ability to manage a budget and deliver effective programs. For emerging NHs this means:

- Documenting program attendance and volunteer hours to demonstrate competence in record keeping and program delivery
- Find a book keeper to help set up a recognized accounting system for monitoring revenues and expenditures and to help with reporting on any funding received

- Obtaining letters of support from community partnerships demonstrates your connections to the local network and value to others in the community
- Demonstrating knowledge of community needs by undertaking asset maps or community surveys to assess needs
- Demonstrating ability to collaborate by naming partners and identifying other contributors for the project
- Creating a simple annual report with stories of success and photos of activities showing your positive impact in the community



Troubleshooting: Funding and Resource Development Challenges to Watch for...

Problem: Grants are often for short-term projects while the needs of the community are ongoing. Moreover, once a program is started participants rely on it and expect it to continue.

Solution: Having a **capacity building** focus on the project and a **sustainability plan** will help to keep the project alive after the funding has ended. Even though **grants** can be small and short-term, obtaining them builds relationships with funders and adds credibility to the NH. Funders are connected to each other and can inform their friends about your work and notify you of other opportunities. Some funders will offer a three year grant recognizing that it usually takes more than a year to start a project and see results or change in community.

Some NHs are able to balance short-term **grants** with a sustainable approach by being up front with funders that they intend to hire existing staff to build continuity with staffing resources and build on existing program areas.

Problem: You apply for funding and you are turned down.

Solution: Don't give up! You can always re-

apply; sometimes it takes applying more than once to establish yourself with a funder. Ask the funder to meet with you to discuss why you did not get the funding - they may reconsider their decision or they may provide some constructive criticism and show you what you were missing in your application so that they next time you apply you will be successful. Be persistent, look for other funding sources and resources (volunteers, partnerships). Diversifying your resources builds the foundation which is critical in sustaining your NH.

E: Government Gaming Funds: BC Gaming Grants

In the Province of British Columbia "Direct Access" gaming **grants** are a straight forward application available on-line from the Gaming Commission website (www.gaming.gov.bc.ca/grants/docs/guide-cgg.pdf). **Grants** are available for **capital expenses** such as equipment and for program expenses. The program grant requires a non-government source of matching funds. Volunteer hours can be counted as matching funds. Because gaming will not fund new positions the careful documentation of volunteer hours will allow you to demonstrate that you have delivered the project. Gaming funding will allow for continuity and the expansion of an existing service.

Gaming is a source of funding that can be acquired early in the NH development because you don't need charitable status.

F: Provincial and Federal Government grants and contracts

The government contracts out services to established **non-profit** organizations. Government funding is one of the largest sources of funding for established NHs and provides a relatively stable base for community services and administration infrastructure.

Service contracts are usually obtained through a competitive proposal process. Opportunities to bid on provincial government contracts in B.C. are listed on the B.C. bid website (www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca).

Federal government funding opportunities are

announced on different Ministry or department websites such as Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) for summer student employment funding or Heritage Canada for cultural projects.

When a NH provides a government service there is a high level of accountability and reporting required; for that reason around 10% of funding for administrative costs may be claimed to support NH management and infrastructure.

In Canada, summer career placement grants help NHs cover the costs of running day camp programs. The NH charges a fee to cover some of the program costs and the HRSDC grant will top up the wages of the student. These grants keep day camp fees at an affordable rate.



Troubleshooting: Funding Resource Challenges to Watch for...

Problem: Established NHs identify two potential problems that need to be managed with government funding: (1) Government funding is targeted for a particular purpose and (2) the NH may find that their own mission and program focus can become diverted by chasing or accepting offers of government funding for programs that don't easily match the NH mandate. Delivering programs inconsistent with one's values is referred to as "mission drift." There is also the potential for government funding to limit the NH ability to criticize government policy- which may be viewed by government as "biting the hand that feeds you."

Solution: The pros and cons of government funding is something to be weighed by the NH board. Having a board policy about the types of funding the NH will accept can help the organization make quick decisions as opportunities arise.

"One Government funded program provided the NH with infrastructure resources and that was great, but it was more than 50% of our budget

and staff. Also it was a city-wide program so there was a level of tension in defining who we were because (a) it was service driven and (b) it was government funding with specific stipulations as to who could access it. Part of our philosophy is about being open and inclusive to everyone and our open door was jeopardized... it put our NH in crisis when we lost the program, but losing it has forced us to become clearer about what we do." Executive Director, Little Mountain NH.

"Our NH has struggled with the balancing act of being able to advocate politically and delivering large government contracts. Separating the bureaucracy from the politicians is the secret to working in the context of government services. The relationship you build with the contract manager can keep the project importance in front of them, allowing the NH to advocate without threats to funding. Staying focused on the issues and remaining politically neutral, means holding all parties accountable for things important to the community." Executive Director, North Shore NH.

G: Fees as Revenue

Some programs are not funded, or are only partially funded by **grants** or government funding, making fees necessary. NHs try to keep fees low and may offer "scholarships" to ensure programs are accessible. Programs such as pre-school or daycare may be 100% fee based. Government subsidies may be available for low-income families.

Focusing your energy into one program can be a beneficial strategy for getting started. By focusing on the need in the community for childcare, several NHs have been able to build a program and funding base. As a fee-based service, childcare sustains the organization and builds the NH reputation as competent program managers. The business may keep growing as the demand from parents and schools expands.

H: Social Enterprise

Some NHs add revenue to their budget by

operating a **social enterprise**. A **social enterprise** involves selling goods or services to generate revenue, for example, starting a thrift store, a catering service or a recycling operation can make money for the NH. Renting NH space is a **social enterprise** that creates revenue for a NH - charging organizations that can afford to pay for space helps keep the doors open for the wider community. The **social enterprise** venture may also add benefit to the community by involving vulnerable community members in the operation of the project as volunteers or paid workers. Thinking creatively and taking calculated risks is part of developing a **social enterprise**.

The Story of Donna's Attic Thrift Shop at Gordon Neighbourhood House

The thrift store, Donna's Attic, started small with Saturday morning sales of donated items in the lobby of the NH. A rack of clothes and table of odds and ends took care of itself with little staff involvement. Word of mouth brought more donations into the NH and sales became more popular requiring a move into a more spacious room on the first floor. The neighbourhood conditions for a thrift store were ideal. The downtown neighbourhood has middle and lower income people as well as a transient community with a large rental population - there are always people interested in buying and selling items at the end of each month. Eventually revenue became significant enough that the Board and staff decided to assign a full-time programming room to the "Attic". It was a difficult decision to assign a valuable room exclusively to the store, but the revenue is so significant that it justifies the space. Revenues support programs as well as make up for operating budget shortfalls and helps keep the agency afloat. Much of the credit for this amazing achievement was due to the work of one volunteer, Donna, who volunteered her time 4 days a week. The store is entirely staffed by volunteers who find meaningful community connections at the Attic.

of your NH can be a useful strategy in getting business involved locally. Soliciting local businesses gets business people committed to volunteering and creates a "buy-in" for the organization, or incentive for support.

The Diamond Ball Gala at South Burnaby Neighbourhood House generates a revenue of over \$20,000 for the NH through their collaborations with local business owners who help to organize the event. South Burnaby NH.

2. Managing Funding

Cost recovery principle for funding and resource utilization

Cost recovery means that the resources coming in match the costs going out. Recovering costs ensures that the NH will not exceed its financial capacity and end up with the volunteer board liable for deficits. Sometimes this means that a NH will refuse a grant opportunity because it cannot operate the proposed project on the grant funding received without incurring costs that exceed resources. Partnerships, volunteers and in-kind donations often round out the budget to fill resource gaps. However, cash purchases must balance with cash resources.

"I remember putting in a proposal for a project and I got half of the money that I asked for and I simply had to say that I could not do the project with the funds we were offered. So the person on the other end was great and said that we might be able to connect with other funds. They helped us find another funder and we were able to do the project."
Executive Director, Mount Pleasant NH.

Building administrative capacity

Project costs and infrastructure (non-project specific) costs are supported through **grants** and contracts. Most funders will accept that 10% of the funding (depending on the size of the project) is needed to support the administration of the project and cover grant reporting necessities.



Advice for starting a social enterprise and sometimes startup funding can be found on websites such as:

www.socialenterprise.ca

– ENP – Enterprising Non-Profits

www.vancity.ca

– head to "My Community" on the site and see research and publications on social enterprise.

I: Recruit local business owners to join committees

Engaging the business community in the work



The administrative portion of the funding helps to keep the NH operating for the community.

Financial management of a NH becomes complex as the NH grows in the number of funding sources. It may feel like “a house of cards” because funding is patched together with one funding source leveraged against another set of resources. If one source of funds is lost the foundation becomes shaky as programs funded by other sources must carry a bigger load to sustain the organization.

Building the capacity of the NH to manage funding is essential to developing a good track record. Having an accountant or bookkeeper as the board treasurer can help build skills and systems for monitoring revenues and expenses. As the organization grows ensure that staff receives training in budget management and that good systems are in place for financial management of fees and donations. Hiring an accountant to prepare monthly financial statements and complete an annual audit of the finances ensures public accountability for funding received.

3. Marketing and Promotions

Developing a communications plan and strategies for promoting your NH will broaden the profile of your work in the community. Creating a logo and letterhead with a distinct look, begins the process of “branding” the NH, making promotional materials easily recognizable as belonging to your organization. A website where events and activities are posted promotes programs and builds community recognition. Some NHs have other marketing materials such as t-shirts, mugs, fridge magnets and bookmarks containing their logo and contact information. Making use of local media and community boards to advertise programs is a good way of

getting information out to the community. Adding a story about your activities for the local paper or posting a newsletter on the website all help the community learn about your work and build support for it.

4. Key Requirements for Successful Resource Development:

Being politically aware and connected

Gaining political support for the NH through building relationships with City Councilors and Provincially and Federally elected officials will make the work of the NH visible to government. In turn, this relationship will build support for funding community projects and assist in viewing the NH as an essential part of the community. This relationship can be nurtured by inviting officials to attend events at the NH where they meet staff and board members and see firsthand the programs in action. Taking advantage of opportunities for NH board members to speak at city council meetings and address community issues and needs builds recognition of the NH as an important community voice.

"Being politically astute is something you learn through developing and sustaining relationships, staying focused on the issues rather than the politics of the issue is important."
Executive Director, North Shore NH.

"The City Childcare Advocate was really skilled at political activism and encouraged us to get in front of City Council as many times as possible and we did. I cannot tell you how many times we ended up at City Council and that raised our profile." Collingwood NH.



The ANH logo has been in place since 1894. The logo is a recognized copyright property that identifies ANH activities and programs in the community.

Being entrepreneurial and taking calculated risks to generate income

Successful NHs operate like well run businesses and balancing the books is essential to sustainability. Sustaining the NH as a resource for the community means balancing giving to community with getting enough revenue to sustain the facility and operations. This may mean saying no to requests for services that add too much drain on NH resources.

It is also important to ensure that all costs are accounted for in the budget so that adequate revenue is generated to cover non-project specific costs such as heat, light, water and upkeep for the facility. These can be some of the hardest costs to cover as most funders are interested in direct community project funding and a 10% administrative fee may not be sufficient to keep a building open. Having good minds for business on the Board will help generate revenue. For example, charging community groups who utilize the NH facility can be an important part of generating revenue that allows the NH to continue their work and offers community programs at low cost to the neighbourhood.

Taking calculated risks and trying new approaches in communities is part of what attracts resources to a NH. Hiring consultants with the right experience can help build the NH capacity and will pay off in the long term.

"One of the successes of organizations is about taking risks, and it's ok to fail, but you have to take the risk. Hiring a more expensive consultant as a youth facilitator was viewed as risky by the board members, but I went with my gut feeling and made the decision knowing that the facilitator's skills would benefit the NH in the long-term. The project could have flopped, but ended up being one of the most successful ventures to date, enhancing our profile and leading to funding opportunities."
Executive Director, Kitsilano NH.

Be creative! Many grants may not directly relate to what the NH wants to do but with a creative twist you might just be able to make it

work!

Stay focused: don't trace money that doesn't meet the need of the local needs. People are often desperate to seek any kind of funding for their organization. If it does not work in your neighbourhood, then it will not succeed – pay attention to the needs of the neighbourhood.

However you find funding for your NH, it is always important to acknowledge your funder(s). Ensure that you put funders' logos on your print material and make sure you publicly acknowledge their support. For example, if you receive funding from United Way, place their logo on your letterhead, brochures and any public documents to recognize their support.

Another strategy for strong resource development can be achieved through successful program evaluation and reporting methods. If you are able to show funders the work that you are doing and the ways in which it is benefiting the community, they will see the value in financially supporting your organization. (Read more about Program Evaluation in the next chapter).



Helpful Resources and Links for Funding and Resource Development:

www.charityvillage.com

Under the “resources and library” section there is an online database for funding sources, foundations and agencies. Locally, nationally and internationally based funding opportunities are provided, as well as a listing of potential corporate sponsors.

www.managementhelp.org

This site is a free online library for **non-profits** and covers everything from writing up a business plan, advertising and promotion, to understanding a **Board of Directors**. There is a large section on fundraising and how to write a proposal.

www.stepbystepfundraising.com

American in context, this website provides some helpful tools such as a template for annual reports, template letters for soliciting funds as well as helpful hints for fundraising and successful strategies.

nonprofit.about.com/od/foundationfundinggrants/tp/grantproposalhub.htm

This website breaks down grant writing into bite sized, manageable pieces such as cover letters, budgets and sustainability. Each step is described briefly and clearly and each section can be expanded for more detailed instructions.

www.cpcwnc.org/resources/toolbox/writing-a-grant-proposal

This website is tailored specifically for grassroots, non-profit grant writing. It contains helpful hints such as suggestions for follow up, and making sure the grant is a good fit.

www.pskf.ca/publications/grants.html

Set up in a Questions & Answers format, this website outlines questions grant makers might be looking for, that grant writers might forget to ask or not think of as important.



"By working closely with the community, the NH gains an understanding of community issues and develops longstanding relationships with the local population."

Section 5: Programs



Section 5: Programs

- NH programs and activities are “place-based” meeting the needs and interests of a broad cross section of people from the local neighbourhood
- Programs are integrated within the NH mixing people of all ages and backgrounds
- Programs incorporate community building, strengthening relationships and utilizing community skills and assets
- Participants and local institutions are involved in planning, delivering and evaluating programs

A Neighbourhood House Approach to Programs

NHs are responsive to local community; therefore, every NH has different programs which may shift as neighbourhood priorities change. Through its programs, the NH strengthens the community by providing needed services, community events and a gathering place where people of all kinds come together to learn, play, receive and give support, make friends and find meaningful connections with their neighbours. Services are often a gateway for people’s involvement with the NH as volunteers and community leaders.

Many services offered at a NH, such as childcare, can be found in other types of organizations. However, the NH approach is unique in that programs are embedded in a multi-service “**place-based**” approach, making activities available throughout a person’s lifecycle. A variety of programs are integrated within the NH addressing the needs of the broad cross-section of people living and working in the neighbourhood.

A **place-based** approach, for example, means that a child can be dropped off at pre-school while a caregiver can stay for coffee and interact with others, attend a grandparent’s craft circle

or an ESL conversation group at the NH while waiting for the child. In the process of attending the program, caregivers make connections with each other as neighbours.

The children also build long standing relationships at the NH. After graduating from childcare youth have options such as leadership training and volunteer opportunities gaining employment skills as they transition to adulthood. Many youth become the next generation of employees or board members. The NH is part of the family and child’s community of support for as long as they choose.

The NH draws on the surrounding neighbourhood assets as program resources. For example, the local credit union or bank branch may contribute funding or spend volunteer hours at a weekly senior’s program; the local temple or church basement is offered as a site for ESL classes or a family drop-in program. Neighbours may volunteer a skill offering a program for free such as a youth chess club. Everyone will be included in an annual community festival interweaving the network of local organizations and residents who sustain the community.

NH programs are nested in a philosophy of social justice. NH activities take steps for reducing barriers to services. Drawing on local resources, such as food donations and using volunteers, keeps programs free or low cost. By making programs accessible to everyone, the NH addresses social issues such as poverty at the local neighbourhood level.

By working closely with the community, the NH gains an understanding of community issues and develops longstanding relationships with the local population. Working with local residents using **community development** approaches, supports residents in taking leadership roles to address community needs or issues.



Working with a cross section of community and government partners, the NH helps to draw the attention of different levels of government to community experiences and advocate for changes in social policy or a need for funding new resources.

"We have changed consciously to reflect the diversity of our neighbourhood; we have become a more multicultural neighbourhood and our services have changed dramatically as the neighbourhood changes. It's about being out in the community and keeping your ear to the ground and talking to residents and asking people for feedback all the time for programs."
Executive Director, Little Mountain NH.

What Types of Programs are Found at Neighbourhood Houses?

NH programs and services are integrated bringing people of different classes, cultures and generations together. Many programs are group-based to encourage community connections and mutual support. NH programs cover the lifespan from birth to elders with activities such as: volunteer opportunities, mom and tots drop-in, childcare, preschool, after-school care, homework clubs, youth leadership, camping and outdoor recreation, pre-employment skills, family support and parenting education, family pot-luck dinners, women's support, adult education including ESL classes, peer mentoring and mutual support projects, immigrant/refugee settlement counseling, aboriginal family services, seniors wellness activities, and adult day care.

NH community activities can include large sections of the community and leave a lasting legacy in the neighbourhood such as: arts and cultural projects, festivals and events, partnering in civic activism to address community issues, facilitating community **capacity building**, organizing food security projects such as community gardens, engaging in anti-racism education, community leadership workshops, and engaging in community research and planning.

NHs are known for their **innovative** approaches

to addressing community needs using a community **capacity building** approach.

Examples of Innovative Community Projects:

"Youth in Focus":

Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House
"Youth in Focus" utilizes photography and film as a pathway for community engagement. The aim of the project is to meaningfully engage youth in documenting and addressing youth issues in Mount Pleasant through photography and film. This project is in partnership with the City of Vancouver and will be used to provide a youth perspective into the Mt. Pleasant Community Plan, a plan spearheaded by the City of Vancouver.

"HomeGround": The Downtown

Eastside Neighbourhood House

HomeGround was created with the purpose of offering additional sanctuary and sustenance to the vulnerable neighbours in the inner city of Vancouver during the Olympic games. Taking place at a local park, HomeGround activities included art, music, haircuts, foot soaks, abundant quality food and more. Workshops were organized to involve the local community in planning the event and included banner making, storytelling and the development of the HomeGround Zine. Members of the community were given information on how to effectively deal with media; as many as 10,000 international media representatives arrived in the city. The NH provided media guidelines to media representatives in order to ensure the safety of the neighbourhood.

"Immigrant Seniors As Leaders":

South Vancouver Neighbourhood House

Focused on first generation immigrants from a variety of countries, this program provides leadership training for seniors. Seniors learn how to reach out to other immigrant seniors using tools such as community asset mapping. After learning more about community assets and needs, the seniors started volunteer-driven programs putting their own skills and knowledge to use. The seniors are running several volun-

teen driven programs including a South Asian women's group, a seniors walking club, and a Diabetes Prevention Program.

Chemainus “Free Store”: Cowichan Neighbourhood House Association

Receiving donations such as household items, furniture and clothes from both local community members, businesses and organizations such as Eagles, Rotary Club and the Canadian Legion, the Free Store requires very little money to operate. By partnering with local First Nations groups, primarily Penelakut, Halalt and Hul'qumi'num youth and families, the store is entirely run by volunteers. The only expenses include coffee, juice and occasional delivery truck charges. A local bakery donates bread, muffins and cookies. The Free Store not only provides much needed items to families in need, but it also provides a space for families to socialize and connect with each other for free!

"The Kensington - Cedar Cottage Community Newspaper": Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House

The KCC Neighbour (Kensington-Cedar Cottage) is a community newspaper by and for the people living in the Kensington - Cedar Cottage community. Revenue generated from advertising sold to local small businesses covers the printing and distribution of the newspaper to 15,000 households in the local community. The local businesses benefit from low cost advertising. The Cedar Cottage NH facilitates training of volunteers to gain skills in the production of the newspaper as well as supporting the volunteer newspaper committee in writing and compiling the publication. The newspaper has strengthened relationships between the community partners, local businesses, the NH and the neighbourhood.

Steps for Developing Programs at a Neighbourhood House:

Step 1: Discovering your community needs and assets

Following community development principles, NH programs should fill a need in the community by engaging the resources and talents (assets)

of the community. These assets include the skills and abilities of the people who live and work in the area and partnerships with local institutions such as schools and employing local infrastructure such as parks and churches. The best way to identify a community priority is to involve the community in planning processes, thus ensuring the local population's needs are met.

By identifying and addressing community needs, people become more connected to their local community and are more willing to become engaged in the local network. Using local connections recruits diverse groups of people who reflect the makeup of the neighbourhoods to participate in **community needs assessment** and research.

As Collingwood NH was developing, they used community connections such as the MLA and MP, city planners, and neighbours to reach out to all the major population groups in the neighbourhood. “We had multicultural targets, age targets, gender targets, sexual orientation targets and socioeconomic targets and ended up with several subcommittees looking at funding development, program development and facilities development”. Collingwood NH.

Methods for community assessment:

Community Outreach – Meeting informally one to one or with individual groups of people to develop relationships and discuss community issues.

www.civilrights.org/census/outreach/

This site provides a breakdown of different aspects of **community outreach** such as canvassing neighbourhoods and creating outreach materials. This site also provides examples of outreach questionnaires to help formulate your own.

Connect with other community agencies, elected officials and government services to learn about community issues and engage their involvement in action.



Something to think about: It's ok to start off small, focusing your energy into one program is the best way to start!

“My Board told me to start small, focus on one program. You can do well and show the community that you are succeeding in this one area and then you can add other programs once this is solid.” Program Coordinator, Oak Avenue NH.

vancouver.ca/news-calendar/areas-of-the-city.aspx

Websites such as this exist for many cities; this one for the city of Vancouver provides information on events and services for each community. This can be a helpful tool both for connecting with others, and for promoting your own community events.

Learn from the municipal and government sources that release statistics about the local population such as age, income, languages, culture and family status.

vancouver.ca/your-government/2001--2011-census-local-area-profiles.aspx

This website provides statistics on the city of Vancouver, and can be very helpful when looking for a breakdown of statistics at the local level.

www.statcan.gc.ca

Statistics Canada is a helpful for sourcing statistics compiled by the federal government including information on language use, socio-economic and ethnic composition per municipal area. Statistics Canada also keeps statistics from the national and provincial level.

publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/Statcan/89-613-MIE/89-613-MIE2006010.pdf

This links to an in depth **quantitative** examination of the three major cities in Canada; Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, with a specific focus on immigration.

Community Asset Mapping

The process of intentionally identifying and engaging community resources including human, financial, material and physical assets (there are a number of techniques and strategies within this framework that can be used).

www.bonner.org

This link contains several workshop style activities that can be helpful when beginning to undertake a community asset mapping project.

http://www.seda.sk.ca/content/p_Shelley_Kilbride.pdf

This links to a PowerPoint example of a particular community asset mapping project, and walks through planning, methods, questions and

execution.

www.accessola2.com/superconference2006/thurs/419/mapping.doc

This is a straightforward, simple description of asset mapping in general terms, including how to process the information when the project has been completed.

Participatory Action Research – (PAR)

A collective, self-reflective research method that seeks the participation of the community in identifying concerns, generating knowledge and addressing the issue collaboratively.

www.caledonia.org.uk/par.htm

This site breaks down the PAR method into 16 components, and makes it easy to understand the particular requirements of doing PAR.

www.gdrc.org/icm/ppp/par-methods.html

This website is a good place to go to troubleshoot or make sense of the data obtained after conducting **PAR**.

Focus Groups – A small group or sample of the greater population getting together to formally discuss a specific issue.

managementhelp.org/evaluatn/focusgrp.htm

This website provides a look at the basics of conducting focus groups, and is specific to the non-profit sector.

Step 2: Planning programs

Once community needs and interests are understood, include some potential program participants and other service providers in program planning. A first step in planning is figuring out what you want to achieve and how you will achieve it. Develop clear program goals and objectives. When funding is available, programs can be led by staff and/or volunteers. When resources are limited the program can be run by volunteers including board members.

Note: The NH may need to build its capacity in some of these practices. Community assessment skills are very important because the community is always changing.

Note: Remember to keep your target market in mind – for example, seniors may not be keen to venture outside in the evening and family events may be better suited for the weekend rather than week days.

"Through outreach and talking to people we confirm: 'is this issue true for you in this neighbourhood?' Then we strike a steering committee of people from the neighbourhood including a cross-section of government or organizational people and the group affected to plan our response."
Executive Director, Little Mountain NH.

Step 3: Involving participants in program planning and delivery

Many of the most successful programs are ones that are directed or led by community participants. When someone from the community comes up with a program idea, the NH looks at ways they can help make the program happen by involving the participants. When community members are invited to participate by bringing their ideas to the table to test them out, trust is built within the community; community members feel valued and appreciated for what they have to offer.

Step 4: Involving local institutions in planning and delivery

Involving local institutions in program planning builds service partnerships from the beginning. Engaging the municipality connects the town or city planners to the community priorities. Engaging schools and health service personnel connects institutions to each other breaking down the isolation and encouraging new ways to address community issues by pooling resources.

Step 5: Involving other community organizations in planning and delivery

Inviting other community organizations to the program planning table reduces a climate of competition, avoids service duplication and develops partnerships for sharing resources in delivering the programs. The experience of service providers working with the same population is a valuable source of information

Note: Keep in mind that not all programs require all levels of partnerships. For example, a conversation club open for all neighbours to convene is a great way for neighbours to connect and has no cost or outside partnership required.

that can help develop new programs. Collaborative program planning builds a network of relationships and is another way of building community.

The key for starting programs at the NH is to start with connecting with other service partners: "start with partners...so that you are not stepping on anyone's toes and identify the needs with other stakeholder and community members...if you do this you don't overlap services and you get the support of the people rather than having them feel excluded".
Executive Director, South Burnaby NH.

Steps for Delivering Programs

Step 1: Developing consistent volunteer and staff resources

The connections NH participants establish with staff and volunteers are one of the reasons participants continuously return to NH programs. The NH is **place-based** and is nested in the neighbourhood as part of people's social network. Participants describe the people working at the NH as a "second family" and the NH as a "second home". Because of the relational aspect of NH work, developing consistent staff and volunteer resources is critical. Finding ways to retain staff and volunteers can be challenging in changing funding climates.

Suggestions for retaining staff and volunteers and ensuring programs continue:

Continually develop the staff's **community development skills**. Staff with **community development skills** can build volunteer leadership capacity helping the NH sustain and expand programs.

Often staff or volunteers hired for a particular program have additional skills they can use in other programs; doing a **skills inventory** helps to uncover these resources.

Patching together a more full time job with a living wage, from a variety of part-time funding sources provides a more stable job and may help keep the staff person at the NH. Many NH program staff members are either seasonal or subject to frequent staff turnover because of the lack of hours. By building a base of volunteers from the community, when staff move on, the volunteers can move into staff positions and sustain the community relationships.

Step 2: Promoting programs to participants

It is rare that a new program is created and people show up right away. Finding people to participate, involves outreach and calling on connections in the community. Word of mouth is the most effective promotional tool. Finding trusted people in the community to link participants to programs reduces barriers (such as social anxiety) and shows confidence in the program. Depending on how vulnerable the target population is, the program may take months to build trust and get established. Once a program takes off, the participants are the best source for promotion.

Step 3: Integrating programs

As a collection of programs develop over time, the NH integrates these programs so that participants can access the whole range of activities and opportunities that are offered. The programs and activities are viewed as nested within each other like a set of Russian dolls. The integration facilitates intergenerational and intercultural mixing which mirrors a healthy community. This mixing allows participants in one program to provide skills or support to another program. For example, a youth leadership group provides anti-racism education workshops to the senior's wellness group. As part of the dialogue, seniors share stories with the youth, helping them understand the elders in their community.

Step 4: Embedding community development in program delivery approach

The NH approach is about integrating commu-

nity development goals into the service approach. Staff or volunteers coming to the NH with a service background will need orientation about how to work within this framework. The biggest change for more traditional service workers will involve seeing the big picture of **community development** as a goal of each program. This means learning to work with community partners and volunteers and seeing the community as part of the NH.

This shift in thinking also involves seeing people served as participants or constituents instead of "clients" and working with a community's assets and strengths when addressing community needs. A program worker who is skilled in this NH approach will be able to draw out and support the skills and abilities that the community members bring to programs.

"A woman who recently immigrated from Singapore started coming to the family drop-in and within a few sessions, expressed concern about hungry kids. When asked about her ideas to address this issue the participant suggested organizing the parents to bring food to share with the group. As her leadership in the group began to take hold, with support from the NH, she contacted the local health nurse to help organize a community kitchen. From there, with the confidence to do more in the community, she went to the local school and organized a hot lunch program for the children. She is now training other parents how to take on leadership roles in the community."

Executive Director, Little Mountain NH.

"A participatory action research grant enabled us to train a group of parents to learn about community research and facilitation skills, and then engage other families within the Vietnamese and Spanish communities. The group got together and took on some advocacy skills and spearheaded some issues around poverty. We supported them in becoming 'mini experts' in issues around child care and housing so that when they gave talks and workshops they could speak to these issues and discuss resources when they facilitated talks with groups in the community."

Executive Director, Mount Pleasant NH



You will need to ensure you have a staff orientation manual and a volunteer orientation manual.

1) Staff / Volunteer Orientation Manual

By having a manual, the personnel make sure they have important information in order to understand the organization and its policies, what is required of them, procedures, roles and responsibilities.

2) Program Manual

A program manual ensures that the program runs smoothly. The manual will outline the goals and objectives of the programs. The aim of the Program Manual is to make sure that when staff and volunteers change, the programs will still be able to continue.

Step 5: Sustaining programs in an ever-changing resource environment

Sustaining NH programs is as much an art as a planned strategy. Continuous planning and evaluation, as well as relationship building, will help to keep a program relevant and keep partnerships dynamic. A **sustainability plan** can help plan ahead for changes in resources in an ever-changing environment.*

Program Evaluation

Evaluation of programs is a process for collecting information from people who have a stake in their success. Evaluations are done in order to provide feedback for the NH Board and program organizers. Feedback lets the NH know they are on the right track and can provide suggestions on how a program can be improved.

Program evaluation is also a useful tool used to inform funders about the impact of their investment on the community. The measurements from these results are important information to give funders who want to be able to see how their funding is affecting a positive change for the community.

1. Methods for program evaluation

Evaluation processes can be simple, such as a participant survey after a workshop, or more complex, such as conducting a **focus group** in the community in order to evaluate the impact of NH programs.

Evaluation can be done by the NH or by an external evaluator depending on the type of information you are looking for and the purpose of the evaluation. Data collected can be **quantitative**, such as the number of people who participate in a program, or **qualitative**, such as the narrative stories from the participants about how the program makes a difference in their life.

Methods include:

- Statistics gathering such as number of participants
- Participant feedback or satisfaction surveys
- Focus groups or group discussions
- Storytelling and dialogue using creative methods such as film or photographs
- Tracking feedback and information from meeting notes

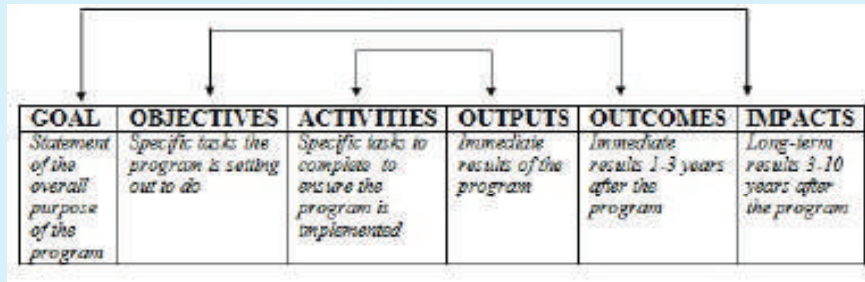
Collingwood NH talked about the impact of using storytelling as a means of evaluating a program for a funder using a story book as a final report back to a funder: "We still had all the information but we creatively depicted it. And that funder still tells me that it was one of the most touching things she has seen." Collingwood NH.

2. Using logic models as a method for program planning and measuring community change

Many funders use logic models as part of funding applications and reporting requirements so it is a valuable skill to learn. A **logic model** is a framework created for understanding the "logic" or connections between resources put into a program (inputs), the activities held (outputs), and the community change (outcomes) that results from those activities.

This framework includes an evaluation component (referred to as an outcome measurement framework) to measure the immediate results that occur with the activities. The evaluation component uses the same type of evaluation tools as mentioned above.

*See the Funding and Resource Development Section on p.36 for other strategies.



Logic Model*

*"Every program has a logic model and evaluation framework and I find that staff really like it because it helps to keep them focused and it provides them with the opportunity to look at the successes which sometimes get lost when they have to do a report back."
Executive Director, Frog Hollow NH.*

Communicating results

Program statistics are really important for proving that the NH is needed and utilized by the community. Keeping records about volunteer hours, program attendance and a collection of success stories and photos to share with funders demonstrates that the NH is an important asset to the community. Make a point of getting a story about a program in the local media, telling the community about your success.



Helpful Resources and Links for Program Evaluation:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/index.html>

This is an excellent resource for designing a simple **logic model**.

www.insites.org

Article, "Everything You Wanted to Know about Logic Models, but were Afraid to Ask", Beverly Parsons and Connie Schmitz.

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/pubs/contribution/ripple-ricochet/index-eng.php

Splash and Ripple: Using Outcomes to Design and Guide Community Work.

managementhelp.org/freenonprofittraining/diagramming-your-nonprofit.htm

This website not only gives examples of possible **logic model** templates, but provides comprehensive definitions of terms associated with **logic models** that may be confusing.

www.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/ohpp/Pages/Steps/PPSStep3.aspx

For an in depth, detailed orientation into creating a **logic model**, this online document leaves nothing out and provides several examples of **logic model** formats.

* Basic Logic Model, Courtesy of © Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2009.



Volunteers play key community integration roles by helping the NH bridge the variety of community differences. Volunteers of different ages bring local community experience and knowledge, such as language and cultural skills, making it possible to reach isolated community members who may not otherwise connect with the NH. This bridging role helps the NH exercise values of community inclusion and a commitment to reflect local population diversity.

Section 6: Volunteers



Section 6: Volunteers

- When NHs begin they are 100% volunteer based
- As the NH resources grow, paid staff support volunteers who are essential to the values and approach of the NH
- When starting a NH, create systems and policies for recruiting and managing volunteers
- Volunteerism is a great way for people to share their gifts and connect with others in the neighbourhood
- Appreciate volunteers everyday and particularly at special occasions

The Role of Volunteers in Neighbourhood Houses

“Volunteers are the energy of the NH.” Kitsilano Neighbourhood House.

In the beginning, **NHs start out as 100% volunteer-based** organizations. As the NH grows it develops funding capacity to pay staff to run the NH and its programs. Once funding is secured, the NH will often hire an Executive Director or Program Coordinator to conduct the work of the NH with volunteers and participants. However, volunteers remain at the core of what a NH does. The NH **grassroots** values and approach are embodied in the roles of its volunteers - their work is embedded in all of the activities described in this Toolkit. The NH belongs to the community and volunteers reflect that community ownership.

NHs provide a place for members of the community to connect with others and participate meaningfully in community life as program participants and/or volunteers. Volunteerism is personally fulfilling and a powerful way of gaining new experiences and relationships. Volunteer participation can range from sitting on the **Board of Directors** to coordinating programs

and countless other roles such as preparing food in the **community kitchen** or helping with building maintenance.

Volunteers play key community integration roles by helping the NH bridge the variety of community differences. Volunteers of different ages bring local community experience and knowledge, such as language and cultural skills, making it possible to reach isolated community members who may not otherwise connect with the NH. This bridging role helps the NH exercise values of community inclusion and a commitment to reflect local population diversity.

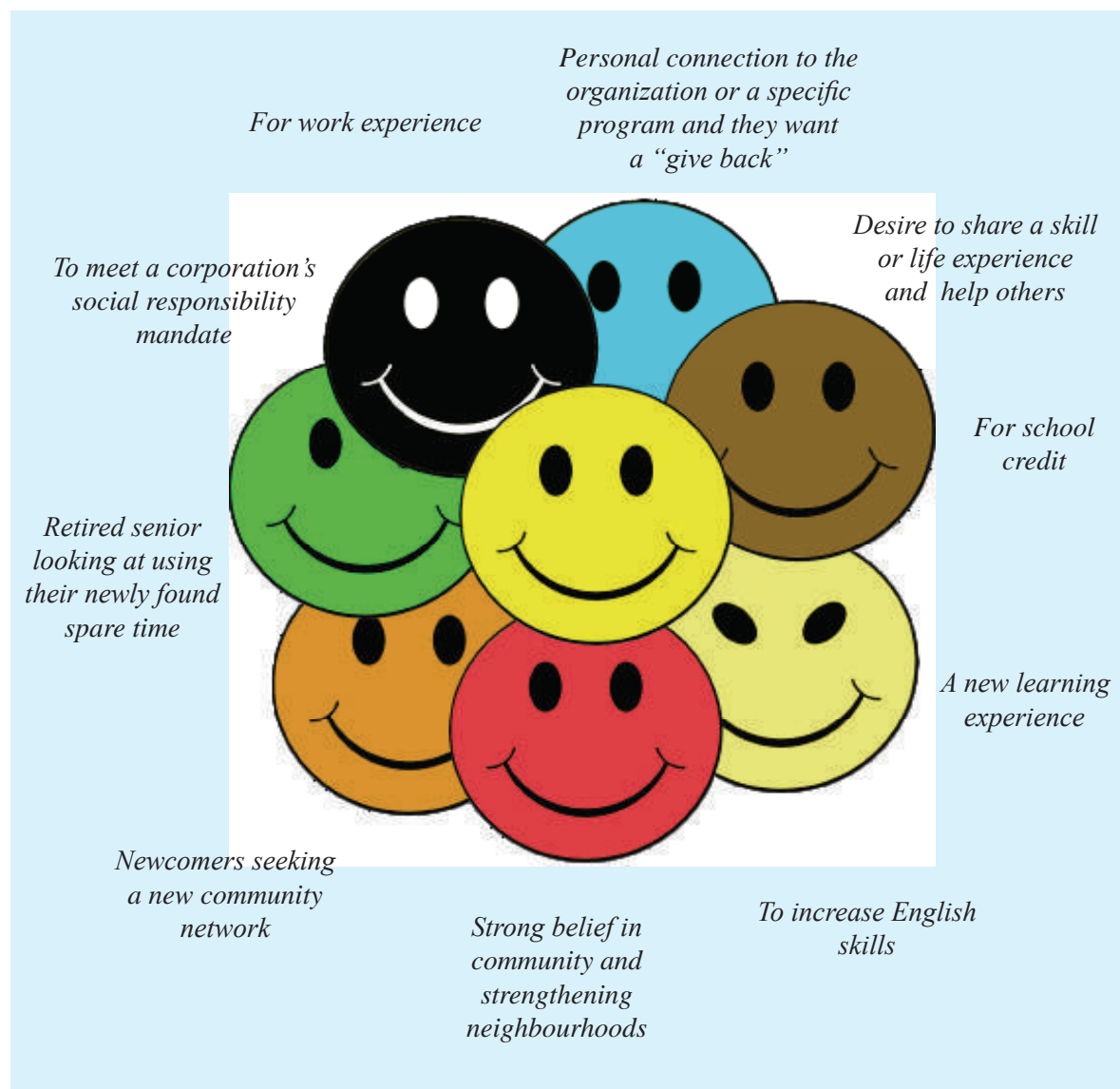
The role of staff working with volunteers in programs varies depending on the degree to which the program is volunteer-driven. For a completely volunteer-run program, staff supports the volunteers by facilitating access to NH resources such as helping to create program posters and providing access to a photocopier and program space. In programs that are more staff driven, volunteers may help the staff with tasks such as serving and preparing food. Office volunteers are very important for welcoming people and taking time to make connections as people walk through the door. The volunteers can set the tone for the organization, creating an environment that makes people want to come back.

What types of activities would volunteers do?

- Start up and run a new Neighbourhood House
- Run social, educational and recreational programs
- Peer support and outreach
- Building maintenance
- Engage in community research/asset mapping

- Play music at a community festival
- Grow vegetables in a community garden
- Help out in the kitchen
- Help with mail outs or administrative tasks
- Answer phones at reception
- Help as board members or sit on a committee
- Bridge language gaps as interpreters and translators

What Motivates Volunteers to Become Involved?



Motivating Factor for Volunteers

Some examples of volunteer contributions:

“A group of us have been running the NH for 14 years and the only paid person is the book keeper. When this town fell on hard times after the mill closed some of us decided we needed a NH to help deal with the social issues that started to develop. The youth of the community didn’t have anything to do, so a friend and I started the NH. Since that time, the community has really pulled together keeping the NH going and developing volunteer based programs.” Executive Director, Cowichan NH.

“The NH has been going since 2004 and we didn’t have any staff until 2008. The board members play the role of the Executive Director, supporting me as the program staff in my job running the programs. Board members attend meetings with political officials and funders so I can focus my energy on meeting community needs.” Program Coordinator, Oak Avenue NH.

“We have a really interesting woman who is a retired school teacher and she opens up a lending library once or twice a week to kids and their parents and we would not be able to do that without a skilled volunteer – we simply would not have the resources.” Executive Director, Mount Pleasant NH.

“A volunteer senior is organizing a workshop on using scooters. She is going to map the sidewalks that are accessible in the area so that she can give it to other seniors helping them learn how to get around independently and get over their fear of using their scooters.” Executive Director, Kitsilano NH.



“We talk to participants in the house and foster interest and then we give them the opportunity to volunteer and do something they are interested in. Ultimately it is about being receptive to people’s ideas and helping to make it happen.” Executive Director, Mount Pleasant NH.

Steps for Working with Volunteers

Recruiting volunteers

Volunteers are recruited from the general public and from programs at the NH and other community agencies. Volunteer recruitment usually includes an application form and/or an interview to match the volunteer's interests and skills to NH activities or tasks. If a volunteer brings a new skill to the NH, a new program may be started that is driven by the volunteer. Finding volunteers involves reaching out through as many avenues as possible to connect with the full range of people living and working in the neighbourhood.

Being inclusive when recruiting volunteers

Volunteering is another way of integrating people into the community who may be experiencing personal challenges such as mental, physical or language barriers. Intentionally reaching out to people recognizes that all community members are valued by the NH and helps form relationships that may not have otherwise formed. Some people may require extra support when they first come through the doors, but as they become more comfortable at the NH they become self guided.

“A resident in our community who was having some real mental health challenges had become very isolated and was on the verge of being homeless. He came into the NH and somebody offered him a cup of coffee. Fifteen minutes later he was in the kitchen doing dishes because he appreciated the coffee and wanted to give back. So he started to volunteer in the kitchen and then in the computer lab and then he met the love of his life here. He is still very actively involved and engaged in the neighbourhood. .”
Collingwood NH.

“What we do is create an environment where people can come forward with their willingness

to contribute. The work has to be meaningful to them. We have a blind fellow who comes to the NH and folds brochures. It takes us more work to actually re-fold them, but for him the experience to come here every week is his contribution and it is very meaningful for him.”

Executive Director, Little Mountain NH

Managing Volunteers

Setting up systems for volunteers helps facilitate recruitment and tracking of volunteer's hours and roles. Most NH lack resources for paid volunteer coordinators, so systems can help create some efficiency for the board or program staff recruiting and working with volunteers.

Volunteers should be provided with information and an orientation similar to that provided to paid staff. A volunteer orientation manual will assist with orienting and managing volunteers.

What's in a volunteer orientation manual?

- The mission and purpose of the NH
- Policies and procedures relevant to volunteers
- Volunteer job descriptions
- Program training for volunteers

This information will help to ensure you cover your legal responsibility to the volunteers (for example, ensuring adequate insurance coverage) and reduce risk for the community at large (for example, completing criminal record checks). It will also make sure that volunteers feel comfortable in the NH and informed about the organization.

“I think that we have a responsibility to give something to volunteers. So whether that is training, or making sure that they have what they need, making sure they have someone to go to and that we are providing them with a safe environment...”

Executive Director, Kitsilano NH.

Appreciating Volunteers

One key element in working with volunteers is recognizing their efforts and the time they dedicate to the NH. There are a number of ways in which volunteer recognition can be carried out:

- Encourage and support their work on a daily basis
- Provide training opportunities
- Annual appreciation events where people's efforts are recognized
- Nominate volunteers for a community service award

Many NH recognize volunteers at an annual event presenting them with a certificate of appreciation or other token of gratitude. The Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC holds an annual "Good Neighbour Awards" gala where NHs recognize outstanding volunteers and corporate "good neighbours".



Remember that volunteers are not “cheap labour”; they are the heart and soul of the Neighbourhood House and without them we would not be able to operate.

“Every year we hold an annual dinner to recognize volunteer’s hard work. We hold the event in April during National Volunteers Week. Each year there is a different theme and the meals and activities for the evening reflect these themes. Another important aspect of working with volunteers is to be mindful of saying thank you in an ongoing capacity to ensure that volunteers feel appreciated and acknowledged.”
Program Director, Alexandra NH.

“A Neighbourhood House is like a community garden: it is made up of all kinds of plants of ev-

ery variety, colour and shape. New plants grow amongst the older ones that eventually become mulch for new ones...”

Executive Director, Kiwassa NH.



Helpful Links for Volunteerism:

www.volunteervancouver.ca

Provides volunteer opportunities and programs based in Vancouver as well as opportunities abroad.

govolunteer.ca

This is a great resource for acquiring volunteers at every level from board to general operational assistance. The site is user friendly and has volunteer opportunities listed by region, individuals' specific skill sets, area of interest and specific time commitments.

volunteer.ca

Volunteer Canada is a national organization for volunteerism in Canada and provides users of the site with information including stats and figures on volunteering, issues and policies as well as links to organizations and useful resources for volunteers.

www.e-volunteerism.com

Electronic Journal of the Volunteer Community

This interactive website provides innovative links and resources around volunteerism, from “Using Social Media in Your Volunteer Engagement Strategy”, to youth and volunteerism. The purpose of the website is primarily for volunteer leaders and managers who want to broaden their creative ideas for volunteerism.

www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/

This link to **Volunteer BC** provides information and templates for creating volunteer documents from contracts to manuals. The site covers information from media relations to a glossary of definitions and terms and the site offers information for volunteers as well as for **non-profit** organizations.

Glossary of Terms

Advisory Committee - a group of representatives from a specific community selected to make recommendations or input on any given issue; in the case of NHs, a resident advisory committee is comprised of local residents who monitor and support the work of the organization.

Advocacy - to act or speak on behalf of another person or group.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) – an organizational development process that focuses on what is working in an organization rather than what is not working and trying to fix it; it is a strategy employed to ensure that all members are working towards same goals.

Asset-Mapping - (see Community Asset-Mapping)

Barn-Raising Approach - an approach that focuses on pooling local resources and focusing on a collaborative, community based approach to achieve goals.

Board of Directors - an appointed or elected governing body of an organization.

BC Gaming– the BC Gaming and Enforcement Branch is under the Ministry of Housing and Social Development within the Provincial Government of B.C. Government gaming grants allow eligible organizations to apply for gaming revenues to support a broad range of programs and services. To receive a grant, an organization and the program offered must meet certain eligibility requirements.

Bylaws - a set of rules adopted by an organization for the purpose of regulating internal affairs, organization and structure.

Capacity Building - refers to the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive.

Capital Expenses - referred to here as expenses incurred in order to start up a NH; this would refer to money spent to establish oneself.

Champions - people who support your cause and are willing to donate time and resources to get a project off the ground.

Coalition - a group of individuals or organization that come together for the purpose of completing a project.

Collaboration - identifying the intersections of common goals, and working with other individuals or organizations to achieve these goals.

Community Asset Mapping - an asset-based approach to community development; refers to the process of cataloguing the resources of a community and is used to develop policies and activities through understanding or “mapping” a community’s resources.

Community Assets - skills and resources possessed by members of the community that can be pooled for the benefit of all.

Community Development - a broad term used to refer to the process of building community; a process to develop and enhance a community in terms of any and all realms including social, physical, environmental, cultural, political and economic.

Community Kitchen - a communal area where groups of people can come together and forge connections over the sharing of cooking and eating.

Community Needs Assessment - a series of steps and analysis to determine what the community would like to see in their area.

Community Outreach - a process that involves going out into the community to develop relationships and better understand the needs and issues of local people.

Community Skills Inventory - assessing the skills of the people in your community; finding people with specific skills and expertise to utilize these skills in the NH.

Constitution - a document that outlines the core operating values and constraints of an organization.

Cost Recovery - the resources coming in to the NH match the costs going out.

Diversified Funding - ensuring that your source of funding is coming from different places; this is an effective strategy to sustain an organization and then you are not reliant on one source of funding.

Focus Groups - this is a form of qualitative research wherein different people are brought together and asked for their opinions on the subject at hand whether it is a product or a concept.

Grants - monetary assistance.

Grassroots - refers to something that begins at the source, or at the local level. Grass roots initiatives are from the ground up, rather than from the top down.

Innovative - taking a new and unique approach; something that is particular to local needs.

Logic Model - a framework for understanding the logic or connections between resources put into a program (inputs), the activities (outputs), and community change (outcomes) that result from those resources.

Mentoring - the act of sharing knowledge with another, on an individual basis.

Mission Drift - inconsistency to one's values; occurs when external or internal events cause the organization to deviate from its purpose and core values.

Mission Statement - lays out who an organization is and what they do. The Mission Statement usually remains constant over time.

Neighbourhood - refers to the small area bound by both place and people with the important characteristic that they have a tendency towards change. In our work, we often use the terms neighbourhood and community interchangeably.

Neighbourhood House (NH) - a volunteer-driven, community-based social service agency that provides programs and services in response to community needs.

Non-Profit - an organization which does not aim to accumulate profit, but rather directs surplus funds back into its own projects. A non-profit status allows for tax related benefits, as well as funding opportunities.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) - a collective, self-reflective research method that seeks the participation of the community in identifying concerns, generating knowledge and addressing the issues collaboratively.

Place-Based Approach - an approach drawing upon local knowledge and accessing local talent individually or within community organizations.

Qualitative Evaluation - an assessment process measuring the quality of something; a qualitative evaluation will look at the content, relevance and achievements. This evaluation measures how well you did something.

Quantitative Evaluation - an assessment process measuring the quantity of something (participants, programs, cost, etc.); this evaluation process measures how much you did of something.

Resources - a broad term used to describe all elements needed to run a NH, including time and financial contributions.

Risk Management - being aware of potential incidents/accidents that can occur within an organization; having a plan to implement in order to combat potential incidents that could happen.

Social Enterprise - profit-making businesses set up to address social or environmental problems.

Social Inclusion - a series of positive actions based on achieving and supporting others to achieve – a mandate of inclusivity; combating social exclusion or the disenfranchisement of certain people in society.

Stakeholders - someone with a vested interest in a project.

Strategic Plan - a process of making decisions, determining the direction of the organization and

assessing what steps need to be taken to pursue this goal.

Strengthening Neighbourhoods - this describes the process of improving the social, cultural, physical, environmental and economic assets of a “small, localized area around the home” (MacLennan, 2006).

Succession Plan - a plan implemented to ensure a smooth transition between two different people occupying the same position; in this context it refers to a plan built in to ensure a smooth transition from one board member to the next in order to maintain the organization’s consistency, stability and efficacy.

Sustainability Plan - a structured plan or set of goals for sustaining an organization (NH) and keeping it running.

Vision Statement - outlines the short term and long term directions of an organization. The Vision Statement can change as the community changes.



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