



Neighbourhood Small Grants



SOUTH OKANAGAN & SIMILKAMEEN

DEEPENING CONNECTIONS WHERE WE LIVE

Neighbourhood Small Grants is a grassroots program that provides a grant of up to \$500 to empower community members to make their neighbourhoods even better places to live. Grant recipients become changemakers in their neighbourhood. They invite and welcome others, share their experiences and stories, and inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

In the South Okanagan and Similkameen, 64 individuals grew an idea and received a grant. These events brought joy and created memorable moments for hundreds of neighbours.

Some block parties focused on beautification projects, growing a community garden, trail maintenance, and removing fuel loads; while other gatherings centred on themes or games. Other neighbours hosted workshops on nsylxcən language, art making, bike maintenance, and food preservation.

Their exciting outcomes were shared through stories and photos.

Please enjoy these project highlights.

RIDGEWOOD CHILI COOK OFF, PRINCETON

More than 40 neighbours gathered for a chili cook off in Princeton's Ridgewood neighbourhood. In addition to 18 great chili entries, neighbours participated in a cake decorating contest for the kids, a cake walk, a scavenger hunt, a barbecue raffle, face painting, rock painting, chalk street art and free hotdogs and beverages.

"The highlight for me was overhearing a young couple saying they'd never seen anything like this before, but they'd heard about their parents talking about stuff like this back in the '80s," shared the project leader, Lindsay. "Everyone really loved meeting their neighbors."

In fact, volunteers have already stepped up to support a similar block party next year, and to organize a table of activities for kids.



MEXICAN FEISTA ON REDLANDS ROAD

When Donna applied for a Neighbourhood Small Grant, she wrote, "Throughout the Covid-19 lockdown, some of the neighbours had become very solitary, and perhaps even lonely." Donna explained, "We have lost some neighbours and added some new folks; we have missed sharing comradery and friendship."

Donna didn't have a complete picture of how she wanted to reconnect when she applied, but by the end, it turned out better than she could have imagined.

"Our neighbourhoods held a Mexican Fiesta party! When planning this event, everyone wanted to be involved; it was a great collaboration by most of the residents."

The youngsters and teens played games and took turns whacking the pinata. The adults happily took home Mexican Pepper plants door prizes.

"In total, we had 35 people, inclusive of Indigenous, LGBTQ, and new immigrants. We had a canvas where everyone had to paint a self-portrait, that was fun!"

Donna shared in closing, "All in all, the event was so successful, we hope to make this an annual event. Thank you so much for the generous grant that made this neighbourhood get-together possible".



Kruger Place



Alysen Place BBQ



Stevens Crescent



Toronto Avenue



Pet Friendly Events



Sendero Canyon Gathering

The Neighbourhood Small Grants program respectfully acknowledges that we learn, live, and celebrate on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Smelqmix and Syilx Peoples.

SOUTH OKANAGAN

CELEBRATING LANGUAGE AND PAINTING

In July, Yutelx Bell invited neighbours to learn some nsyilxcən through a group painting session.

Held outdoors in the beautiful architectural space in front of the Osoyoos Indian Band's band office, the day opened with the Okanagan Song, and then led to the group learning and repeating the salutations and departure words, "waya?" specific to Oliver.

As people painted, Bell introduced new nsyilxcən words for different colours, and for the subject matter being painted such as the mountains and sky. She also translated any specific language requests that came up. "So the language was really incorporated into the whole process!"

The workshop was a huge success, with Bell now planning a paint and language workshop series. "I'm really excited and I can attribute it to my experience in facilitating the initial workshop with the help of the Neighborhood Small Grant Award."



QUILTING FOR COMMUNITY ON ANARCHIST

"Some people think that cutting up perfectly good pieces of fabric to sew them back together again is illogical," says project leader, Patricia.

But, with the support of a grant, a group of 18 quilting enthusiasts on Anarchist Mountain did just that. Starting in July 2022 with a Facebook invitation, neighbours came together and ultimately spent more than 300 hours together, designing and creating a queen-sized quilt.

"While some cut, others pressed the fabric, and still, others sewed the pieces back together. Ultimately, a beautiful quilt that reflects the beauty of Anarchist Mountain was completed."

The group donated the quilt for a draw to give back to the community, with proceeds going to the Anarchist Mountain Fire Rescue Society.



SHARE YOUR PASSION - CREATE A CONNECTION

Residents were invited to display their creations or interests in rock art, handmade jewellery, yoga, scrapbooking, sewing, and much more. A total of 64 neighbours attended the afternoon.

"Everyone was engaged and there were discussions on many topics - everything from beer making to art collecting to our families", noted Wendy. "...there's a desire to have a similar event next year on Anarchist."



Arbour Lane, Oliver



Oliver Ranch Road, OK Falls



Heritage Hills, OK Falls



DIGGITY DOG APPRECAITION DAY

While only living an orchard away, neighbours Donegal and Kim met for the first time to organize a Dog Appreciation Day at the dog park in Keremeos.

"I didn't have much time to organize, so I asked for help on our local Facebook page and Kim replied," explained Donegal. "A task list was created, and very quickly, posters circulated the village."

While folks chowed down on hotdogs (the dogs too!), they also took part in a survey. "We wanted to hear from others their vision of what an awesome dog-friendly dog park could look like." The survey was also available online for a month, with weekly prize draws.

"We lost count at sixty people and even more dogs. Some people just came to watch the dogs play, while others came out just to hang out with other people".

LEARNING TO CRICUT

Cricut crafters, both experienced and new, gathered at the Riverside Centre in Princeton to use digital die-cutting machines, which are capable of precisely cutting almost any crafting material you can imagine.

Of the 20 participants, 6 were fluent in Cricut, the remaining 14 were new or had brand new machines. "We had a great time sharing our love for Cricut art with everyone," says the organizer.

Blanks were provided so that people could make whatever they wanted from the supplies, no matter their level of experience. "This allowed everyone to be artistic!" The organizer was grateful that there was enough power and plug-ins, and is thrilled that this event stirred interest in having monthly Cricut gatherings.



FENCHURCH WELCOME HOME PARTY

After months of rebuilding, cleaning up and hardships, a couple of Princeton residents brought back some cheer into their community with a recent block party, funded through the Neighbourhood Small Grants program.

"Many people are in transition and that's kind of a hopeful thing saying it's a homecoming because some of us have been back on the block for quite a while, and some others aren't there yet," says Todd Davidson who was an event organizer, and one of the dozens of homeowners badly hit by the floods in November 2021.



Lachine Avenue



Disc Golf Course



Clean Up at Riverside

ALBERT'S COMMUNITY GARDEN



"The Keremeos Community Garden is for everyone" declared Albert McCormick, the visionary for the inclusive food hub.

The garden came to life only a few years ago as a project to keep retiree Albert busy, "I saw an empty lot of land and spoke with the owners who offered the plot to be used for a garden."

It keeps growing with the encouragement and support of many volunteers and community partners. The lush garden provides heart-lifting floral displays and tasty produce to the community care homes and local residents and visitors.

"Come pull a weed and take home a vegetable," or simply say hello to Albert and receive a community garden tour.



Art Workshops



Drumming Circle



Learning to Ferment

Neighbourhood Small Grants 2023 Application opens in March

www.cfso.net

Special thanks to the volunteers who gave their time and knowledge to the Neighbourhood Small Grants Advisory Committee.

Neighbourhood Small Grants was delivered in partnership with City of Penticton, District of Summerland, Town of Oliver, Town of Osoyoos, Village of Keremeos, Town of Princeton, and the Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen.

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