

# Getting Started

Getting started can sometimes be the hardest part. Try these tips.

## Find a buddy

- Invite a neighbourhood friend or small group of neighbours that you already know to get together to talk about how to build connections in your neighbourhood.
- Brainstorm ideas and then try to pick the simple easy ones to get started. (check out our website for lots of ideas)



## Define your neighbourhood

- Is your neighbourhood the 8 houses you can see from the doorstep? Is it the whole street that you live on?
- Remember not to make it too big but also ensure it's a natural neighbourhood.
- Don't leave people out if they belong to the natural neighbourhood. (ie: the whole street has 10 houses but you only know people in 8 of the houses, include all 10.)

## Make a map of your neighbours

- Create a map and identify those neighbours that you know and those you don't.
- What do you know about each of them? Do you know their names, how many children they have, do they work outside the home, do they socialize in the neighbourhood, do they have special skills that you could tap into? How long have they lived in the neighbourhood?

## Decide how to make first contact

- There are many ways to make first contact.
- If some of your neighbours are new to the community then creating a welcome basket for them might be great idea. You can connect with the neighbours you already know to ask them to contribute and provide their contact for the new neighbours using the Neighbour Contact Sheet or create a contact map to share with the new neighbours and ask if they'd like to be on the map too.
- If you know many of your neighbours casually then maybe organizing a simple outdoor gathering or walk would bring people together to get acquainted.
- If you have a neighbour who seems hard to reach or lonely then maybe invite that one neighbour for tea. (you can use the Tea for Two Door hanger provided in the kit to initiate this)
- You can knock on your neighbour's door to introduce yourself. You could drop off baked goodies, fresh produce from your garden, a "how are you" card, etc.. and include your contact information. (be creative and use your talents and skills)
- Sometimes holidays are a good time to make contact. Although we don't want to assume that every neighbour celebrates specific holidays, you can always generalize the holiday seasons or ask if they celebrate the holiday. Examples might include cookies during the December holiday season, flowers in the Spring, a pumpkin at Thanksgiving)
- You don't have to connect with all of your neighbours all at once. Give yourself a target of meeting one neighbour a week, especially if you are knocking on everyone's door. Or plan an evening/weekend to introduce yourself to all your close neighbours. (while the cookies are fresh)

## Following up

- Once you've made contact it is important to continue to build on the relationship.
- See the list of ideas for bringing a neighbourhood together for suggestions on the next steps.
- Remember to invite people to participate by utilizing various methods to communicate with them (physical invitations left on their doorstep, Facebook messages, texts, phone calls, etc..)

***Good luck with getting started and remember to have fun!***