How Communities are Organizing Random Acts of Kindness

During this time of crisis and uncertainty, acts of caring, generosity and neighbourliness that have been emerging all across the country. In fact, there seems to be a movement of kindness. From sporadic and random acts to methods of pairing asks for help with offers to help. This wide-scale organized approach to caring is showing up through mutual aid groups and the idea of caremongering.

During our inaugural Brunch Chat with community developers from across Canada and beyond we explored how communities are responding. With the mandatory physical distancing and municipal buildings and many of the places where we gather and receive services needing to close, communities are trying to figure out how to look after one another and do their everyday activities within these new constraints. The result is magnificent - neighbours are helping neighbours.

The consensus is: Community can be more nimble than municipalities. They can often act faster and get help to residents as the need arises: "Citizens have a role to organize acts of kindness, municipalities can support." A new movement of mutual aid and care mongering is emerging and it's rooted in the gifts and asset that the community have to support each other.

Here are some of the ways that communities are caring:
- Neighbourhood phone trees and lists
- Calling seniors and others in quarantine
- Connecting to neighbours through online platforms
- Creating neighbourhood care maps
- Purchasing and delivering fresh fruit and vegetables to people who most need it
- Hosting virtual book clubs

These are some of the ways that we have heard that municipalities are supporting communities in the work they are doing:
- Providing funding to Neighbourhood Associations to support citizens
- Collecting and sharing stories and resources
- Working with non-profit agencies to prepare care packages for families with kids who were accessing afterschool programs
- Communicating with residents and associations; associations can then disseminate the information
- Launching a block connector program; providing training to block connectors on how to keep connecting while respecting physical distancing

The City of Brantford offers a great example of a municipality and community coming together. Lori-Dawn Cavin, the Manager of the Community Recreation Development shared their story:

When our Community first responded to Covid-19, our City was receiving many calls from residents – both from those wanting to help and from those needing help. We were at a disadvantage as we did not have a formal way of connecting the dots in a quick manner. But we weren't without significant assets to "get it done" and reached out to our valued Neighbourhood Associations to take on the role as "connectors", helping those at a neighbourhood level. We reached out and their response was an overwhelming – YES OF COURSE NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATIONS WILL HELP!! And they have, the connections that the NAs are making, supporting their neighbours… it is so inspiring.

As random acts of kindness become organized and intentional, whole communities are coming alive with possibility.

Read More:
[Invisible is Becoming Visible](#)
[Coronavirus: Kind Canadians Start 'Caremongering' Trend](#)
[Inside the Rise of Covid-19 Mutual Aid](#)