



# Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre

## 2013 Annual Report

### **Our Mission**

A welcoming community of families supporting each other through diverse programs and resources to build friendships, strengthen our children, and create healthy neighbourhoods.

- To relieve poverty by providing basic amenities including food, education, counseling and clothing to families in need.
- To Provide parenting education and support
- To provide educational, recreational, and social opportunities for parents and children of all abilities

We are a community based agency that began almost 14 years ago with 6 women meeting together and last year served 532 individual families and 574 individual children in our programs. We purchased, completed renovations and moved back to our original home at the old Oak Park Builders Sales Centre in October 2012 to better accommodate our growing numbers and new programs. Our centre has been set up to be a non-institutional, barrier free space, so that it is welcoming to everyone. It is a reflection of the needs, talents and gifts of our neighbours and friends so that it is relevant to the whole community. 90% of our families live in Oakville. In addition families come from Mississauga, Hamilton, Halton Hills, Brampton, Milton, and Burlington.

Our centre has various programs including, multicultural programs (Spanish, Mandarin, Japanese, South Asian); food bank, community garden, utility bill payments, financial literacy, speech assessment and support, and support for families with challenges through our Child Development Resource Centre. We run infant, toddler, preschool and school-age programs. We also have an affordable school readiness program. We provide free or affordable space to a number of local agencies and businesses to run family programming like La Leche League, Habitat for Humanity, Scouts, Halton Peel Down Syndrome, Posse Project, John Howard Society, YMCA, and Velocity Dance

### **Our Members**

32% of our members have moved to Oakville in the last 5 years.

11% are new immigrants to Canada compared 4% in Oakville.

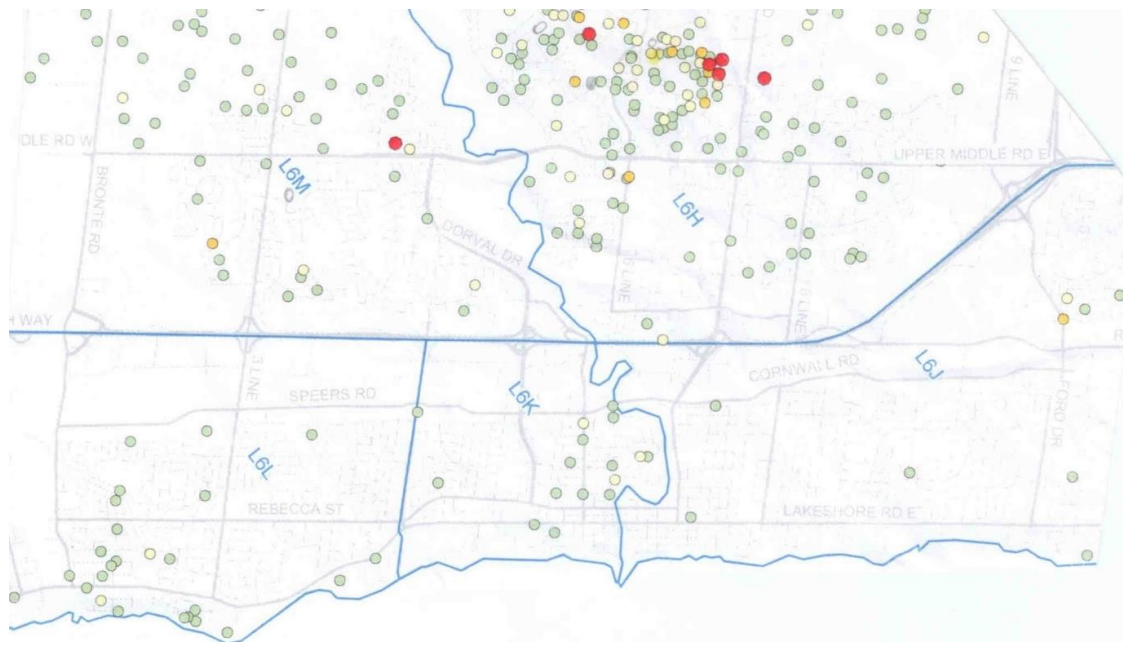
53% were not born in Canada compared with 32% in Oakville.

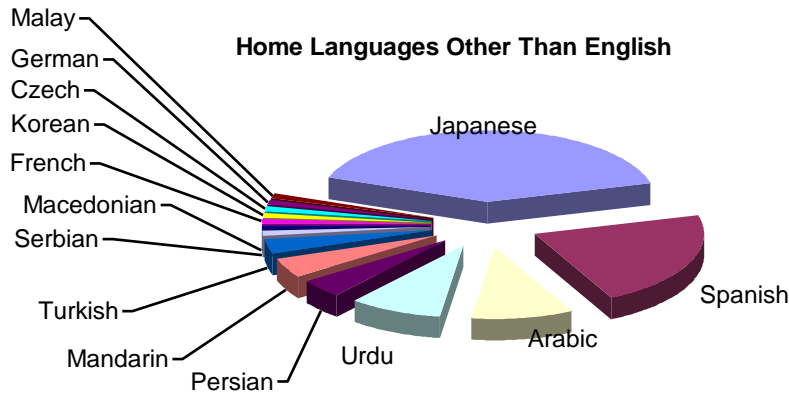
39% live below the poverty line compared with 8.6% in Oakville

29% do not speak either official language most often in their homes compared with 12% in Oakville.

(Oakville statistics are from the 2011 Census, Statistics Canada.)

We saw an increase in attendance from newcomers to our community this year due to the new construction. We had an increase in families joining us who live below the poverty line (24% to 39%). Our survey demographics speak to our success in attracting the most vulnerable in our community to the centre. We had a 3% increase in families from Oak Park due to increased birth rate.





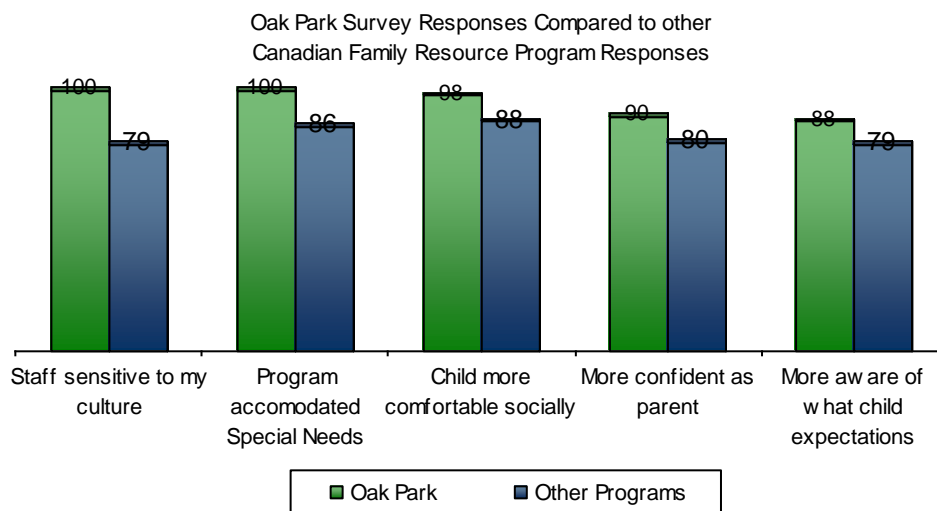
### Positive Impact on the Families we Serve

We asked all our members to complete a survey to see if we were meeting our objectives and the needs of our members. We continue to see a high level of satisfaction with our programs.

#### 80% or more of Participants Agree ....

- That we feel welcomed, treated with respect and have opportunities to get involved.
- My child has increased opportunities to play with other children and is more comfortable in social situations.
- We have benefitted from this program.
- I have made friends I can connect with.
- I have become more aware of resources in the community.
- I feel more supported and confident in my role as parent and I understand my child better.
- My child has increased opportunities to play with age-appropriate toys and equipment.
- I deal more effectively with day to day challenges and our family has more ideas and ways for getting along.
- I use strategies for guiding my child’s behaviour I learned at the centre and I use activities at home.

When compared to other Canadian Family Resource Programs, Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre meets or exceeds respondents satisfaction in all areas.





## Program Highlights this Year

- Purchased, renovated and moved into our new home. That is more than double the size of our previous location. We especially want to recognize the many people who stepped up to assist with all aspects of the building purchase and renovations. It was truly a community effort and we could not have purchased and moved into the building without the support of so many.



- Had volunteer youth groups complete a sand box and community garden and a ton of other tasks.
- Completed a sustainability plan and secured a mortgage to purchase a new building that will double our space.
- Increased our renters to include the YMCA and New Horizon's church.
- Received funding to start a strategic plan reviewing our focus and outcomes; to be completed in the new fiscal year.
- Scored 8.4 out of 10 on the Donner Canadian Foundation Awards for Excellence in the Delivery of Social Services
- The Frith family hosted our family skate.
- Sanctuary Church ran a March Break Camp for us.
- Ran our first ever, Summer camp for 8 weeks. Provided a free camp for 25 children who live below the poverty line.
- Started an after school program 3 days a week and served 30 children age 9 to 13.
- Had a record harvest from our community garden.
- We supported 43 families (75 children & 54 adults) through our food bank. This is double the numbers that we served last year.
- We assisted 101 families in need through our utilities support program.
- Hosted a community food drive with 629 volunteers from 14 faith communities that collected 2,636 bags of food.
- Received food from local schools, churches and libraries to support our families in need.
- Expanded the preschool to 12 children.
- Started a once a week Homeschool group.
- Kid-a-Palooza Learning Fair – 40 community programs had tables at the event and 300 people attend.
- Hosted Oak Park Fall Fair with 1000 people in attendance.
- Mattamy Homes restored our front porch and built new handrails.
- Had 124 amazing program volunteers who contributed 5516 hours, equaling 2.8 staff people.



## Examining The Evidence

Our survey responses show that we are meeting the needs of the community and that we reflect the diversity of our community. Participants value our centre and our programs. The surveys show that we are having a positive impact on families. We are fulfilling our mission, on target for our fundraising plans, and our objectives are reflective of what our participants want. We were able to meet most of our goals last year. We still need to find more volunteers for reception and increase participation in day to day activities.



## **Our Board & Staff Team**

Jamie Bay –Chairperson

Michael Reid -Vice Chairperson

Tara Pearce –Secretary

Lara Rowles –Treasurer

Eleanor Parkin –Membership

Sue McLachlan –Communications

Pat Gushue –Building

Finola Pearson- Member at large

Michelle Knoll- Executive Director

Grainne Galati – Program Support

Lynn Salisbury- Program Manager Drop In

Wendy Voskuil- Program Manager Preschool

Penny Ward- Program Manager Baby Time

Summer Dolbel – Multicultural Program Manager

Dani Towsey- Multicultural Program Manager

Geraldine McRae- Preschool Support

Charlene Abrahams- Family Resource Facilitator

Kim Thorman- Speech Pathologist

Stephanie Scott- After School Program Manager

Ian Broderick- After School Support

## **Recommendations For What's Next?**

- To increase the participation by parents and children in the day to day activities at our centre.
- To increase the number of families who say they have made friends that they connect with outside the centre
- To increase the number of families who use parenting ideas that they have learned at the centre
- Find volunteer front desk staff at least two days a week
- Find financial support for increased food bank members
- Increase community gardens in our local community
- Complete Strategic Planning to review our outcomes, and plan for our future

**Thank you to all our members, partners and funders for their active involvement in every aspect of Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre. We could not manage to do what we do without an amazing group of people pitching in.**