



# Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre

## 2014 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

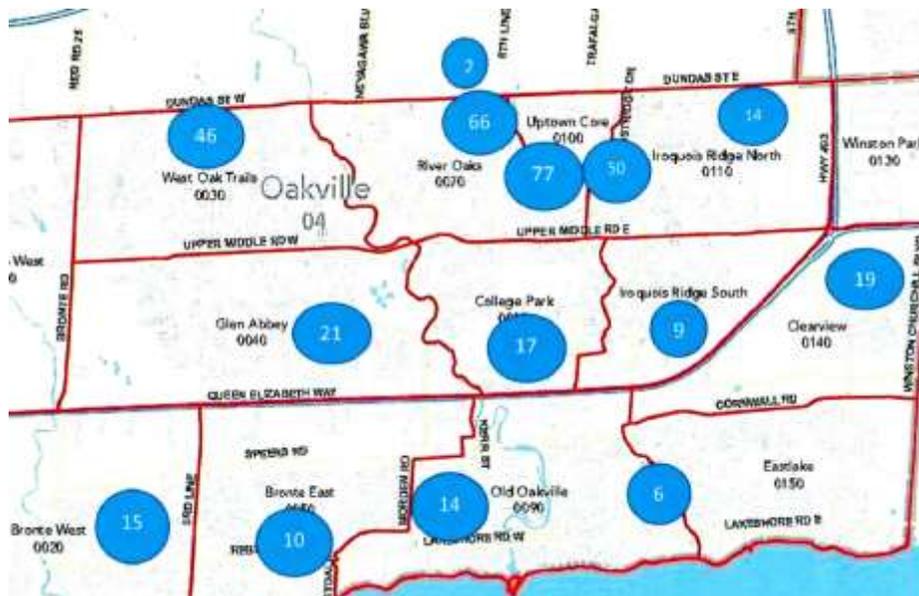
We are a community based agency that began 14 years ago with 6 women meeting together and last year served 538 individual families and 640 individual children in our programs. We spent our first full year in our new home. Our centre has been set up to be a non-institutional, barrier free space, so that 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, Milton, and Burlington.

Our centre has various programs including, multicultural programs (Spanish, Japanese, South Asian); food bank, community gardens, 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, 'YMCA, and Velocity Dance

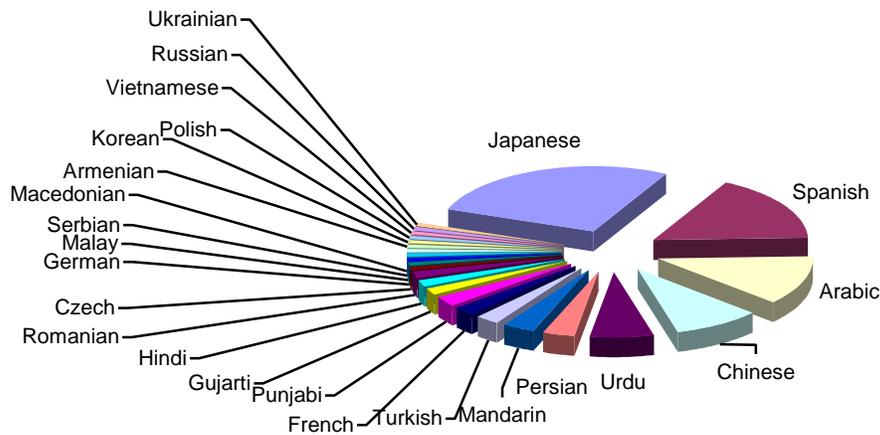
### Our Members

6% are new immigrants to Canada compared 4% in Oakville.  
 53% were not born in Canada compared with 32% in Oakville.  
 31% live below the poverty line compared with 8.6% in Oakville  
 21% 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 both the number of families and children served this year. Our survey demographics speak to our success in attracting the most vulnerable in our community to the centre. After a decline in members from the Oak Park community for a number of years due to a decreased birth rate, we have seen a 5% increase in the last 2 years showing that the community has younger families moving in again, they now represent 12% of our members.



## Home Languages Other Than English



### Positive Impact on the Families we Serve

This year rather than do a member survey we surveyed the community within a 1.5 km radius of the centre. Our survey gathered information to help us better understand community issues so that we can bring people together to find solutions that generate new ways to support and engage with one another. 4400 survey cards directing people to an online survey were distributed by mail to all homes within a 1.25 Km of the Centre (Dundas to Upper Middle and Sixth Line to 8<sup>th</sup> Line). In addition an email went out to 700 members of our centre and the survey link was posted on facebook and was tweeted. The survey was developed and completed online using Survey Monkey. The survey was open from April 14, 2014 to June 23, 2014. 107 surveys were completed by people who live in the L6H postal code area. The 4400 homes within the radius of our centre represent 14,195 people, so we received a 2.7% response rate based on population represented

### How strong is the sense of community in this Neighbourhood?

41% of the people who live in Oak Park rate their neighbourhood sense of community as quite strong to extremely strong, compared with 32% in the 1.25 radius around the centre and 35% in the L6H area. If we exclude Oak Park responses from the L6H area the percent drops to 31% for a strong sense of community.

### How Many of Your Neighbours Do You Know?

It is concerning that the only people in the survey who said that they did not know anyone in the community all lived in Oak Park. Two live in the condominiums and the third was very unhappy about many things in the community. More people who live outside of the 1.25 radius around the centre know all or most of their neighbours (40%), than the people living in the L6H area (32%) or Oak Park ( 32%) or the 1.25 area excluding Oak Park (25%). This could relate to turnover in some communities or to newer communities being more connected to others who moved in at the same time

### What Changes Would Most Improve This Area? (Open ended)

	L6H Area (107)	1.25 Radius of Centre (69)	Oak Park (39)
None	21%	14%	15%
More Events	18%	20%	10%
Community Cohesion	10%	10%	15%
More Child & Youth Programs	7%	6%	5%
Pride in Homes- Upkeep	5%	7%	5%
Increased Police Presence	6%	3%	0%
Increased Street Parking	2%	3%	5%

## What types of activities would you participate in if they were available in this neighborhood?

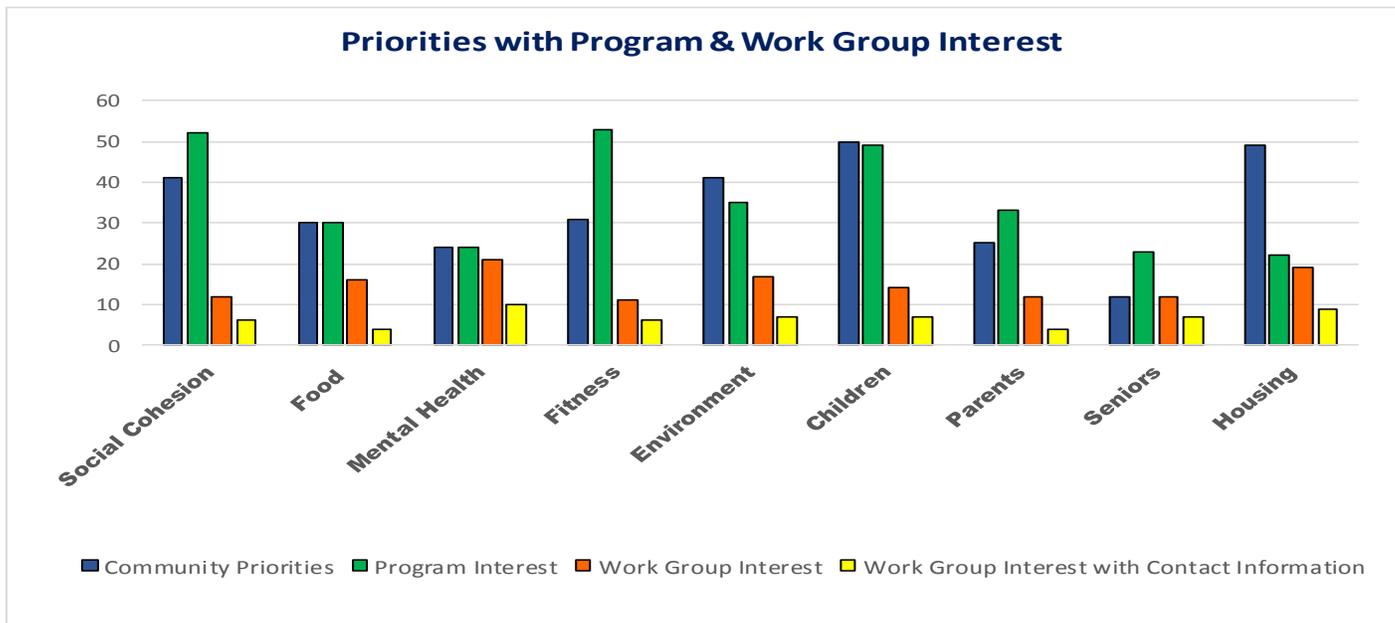
	L6H Area (107)	1.25 Radius of Centre (69)	Oak Park (39)
BBQ	10%	13%	5%
Family Events	10%	9%	5%
Child Events	12%	9%	5%
Adult Fitness	7%	9%	10%
Sports Events	7%	10%	3%
Street Party	8%	9%	5%
Adult Night	7%	9%	13%
Teen Program	8%	6%	8%
Adult Arts & Crafts	4%	6%	8%
Running Group	4%	4%	8%
Garage Sale	7%	7%	0%
Fair	7%	7%	3%
Movie Night	5%	6%	5%
Trail Walk	6%	6%	5%
Community Garden	5%	6%	5%
Earth Day/Environment Act.	5%	6%	3%
Adult Yoga	2%	3%	5%

When we combine the answers for what people like least in the neighbourhood, what people would like to change, activity suggestions and additional comments there was some overlap in responses, so that the full extent of the community interest in these areas did not come across as they were divided into smaller percent responses in each question. Below are the three areas that warrant mentioning.

14% of the 107 respondents mentioned the lack of youth programming in our community.

6% of the 107 respondents requested an increase in playgrounds

4% of the 107 respondents requested parenting workshops



## Top 5 Community Priorities ranked level 3 or higher

- 1.) Children's Social and Educational Opportunities 50%
- 2.) Housing Security and Safety 49%
- 3.) Social Cohesion and Engagement (Knowing our neighbours) 41%
- 4.) Environmental Protection, Community Gardens & Green Space 41%
- 5.) Fitness, Physical Health & Exercise 30%

## Additional Priorities.... (Open Ended)

There were 5 areas where 5% or more respondents listed a priority not listed in the priority ranking question above.

- Community input into planning for increased growth
- Health initiatives
- Community Housing Issue resolution
- Poverty
- Youth

## Program Highlights this Year

- A generous donor covered the costs of our sidewalks and Oakville Community Foundation & Evergreen contributed to our landscape costs
- Had CYAN volunteer youth group complete outside play house and plant trees.
- Our volunteers built two community gardens at the centre and we linked families in need with new local church community gardens.
  - Completed our theory of change process and sent out a community survey. .
  - 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.
  - Provided a free camp for 25 children who live below the poverty line.
- Continued our after school program 3 days a week and served 45 children age 9 to 13.
- We supported 49 families (73 children & 54 adults) through our food bank.
- We assisted 113 families in need through our utilities support program.
- Hosted a community food drive with 549 volunteers from 15 faith communities that collected 2,619 bags of food.
- Received food from local schools, and churches and financial support from the Oakville Optomists to support our families in need.
- Expanded the preschool to four mornings a week.
- 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.
- BMO Team came and painted two rooms at the centre and did general repairs
- Had 124 amazing program volunteers who contributed 5516 hours, equaling 2.8 staff people.



## **Our Board & Staff Team**

Jamie Bay –Chairperson

Michael Reid -Vice Chairperson

Joe Mauro –Secretary

Lara Rowles –Treasurer

Syzan Talo- Member at Large

Finola Pearson- Member at large

Natalia Lishchyna- Member at large Facilitator

Holly MacKenzie- 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

Charlene Abrahams- Family Resource

Kim Thorman- Speech Pathologist

## **What's Next**

### **Support Connect & Contribute**

- 1.) Support family bonds, positive social and skill development and referrals
- 2.) Connect through friendship and mutuality among people of different backgrounds
- 3.) Encourage contribution by providing meaningful opportunities to serve
- 4.) Support, Connect & Contribute by referring to services and providing facilities
- 5.) Review staff structure to accommodate increased needs
- 6.) Organize community committees based on survey results
- 7.) Continue annual survey of members to establish yearly priorities
- 8.) Seek funding opportunities to meet increased need

**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.**