



BOWNNESS VITAL ACTIONS

CREATING A VIBRANT
NEIGHBOURHOOD

BOWNNESS
VitalSigns

2010




BOWNESS VITAL SIGNS: THE HISTORY

IN 2009, THE BOWNESS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, SUPPORTED BY UNITED WAY OF CALGARY AND AREA, THE CITY OF CALGARY, BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS OF CALGARY, THE BOWWEST COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE, THE CALGARY FOUNDATION AND MANY OTHER LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED HUNDREDS OF BOWNESIANS TO DISCUSS THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD: WHAT THEY THINK IS GREAT, WHAT'S MISSING AND WHAT ACTIONS NEED TO OCCUR. INSPIRED BY CALGARY'S VITAL SIGNS, THE RESULT OF THAT PROCESS IS THE FIRST NEIGHBOURHOOD-FOCUSED VITAL SIGNS REPORT IN CANADA, TITLED VOICES OF BOWNESS.

BOWNESIANS WHO WERE SURVEYED SAID THAT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD HAS A GREAT SENSE OF COMMUNITY, A WONDERFUL NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND GOOD TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES. THEY SAID THAT ADDITIONAL EFFORT IS NEEDED IN THE AREAS OF DIVERSITY, EDUCATION AND LEARNING, SPORTS AND RECREATION, AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY. MANY BOWNESIANS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT SAFETY, HOUSING, THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND WELLNESS, AND LOCAL ARTS.

WHILE MANY OF THE ISSUES IDENTIFIED REQUIRE LONG-TERM EFFORT, MANY ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS, WHETHER IN RESPONSE TO THE VITAL SIGNS REPORT OR NOT, ARE TAKING ACTION AND ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE VITALITY OF BOWNESS.

THIS REPORT IS A SNAPSHOT OF THESE ACTIONS. IT IS ALSO A REMINDER TO US WHO LIVE, LEARN, WORK OR WORSHIP IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD THAT WE CAN ALL DO OUR SHARE IN BUILDING THE BOWNESS WE ALL DREAM OF.



SNAPSHOT #1:
**FIRST ANNUAL
COMMUNITY
CHRISTMAS PARTY**



Despite the cold and snowy weather on December 5, 2009, a total of 360 community residents attended the First Annual Bowness Christmas Party. Fifty volunteers served turkey dinner complete with all the trimmings. Inspired by the Bowwest Community Resource Centre, the event was put together by a planning committee of members from seven local agencies, and the Bowness Community Association provided part of the funding. A highlight for many was the entertainment, with local youth sharing their musical talents. Santa Claus made an appearance after the dinner and provided treats for the 140 children in attendance. Attendees praised the wonderful community atmosphere of the event, and everyone agreed that this Community Christmas Party should become an annual event in Bowness.



Bownesians enjoy a holiday celebration.

SNAPSHOT #2:
GATHERING FOR COMMUNITY SUPPERS

Bowness is home to several community suppers. One of them is the Bowness Community Supper, which is held at the Shepherd of the Hills Church (8007 Bowness Road NW) every Wednesday at 6:30pm. This supper is sponsored by five churches: Awaken Church, BowWaters Church, Centre Street Church, Maranatha Church, and Shepherd of the Hills Church. When these suppers first began, only a handful of residents attended, but over time that number has grown to upwards of 70 people.

Monthly Family Suppers are also held from September through June at one of the local daycare centres or preschools, sponsored by the Bowness/Montgomery Early Literacy Project. These suppers also offer a tasty, nutritious meal, and have the added bonus of providing a venue for families with young children to get to know one another. Information about dates for upcoming Family Suppers can be obtained from your local preschool or daycare centre.

SNAPSHOT #3:
**2011 BOWNESS
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS**

2011 will mark the one hundredth year of the community's settlement, and the Bowness Historical Society is leading efforts to make the Centennial Celebrations memorable for all Bownesians. They have started off by working on their second book, *Bowness - Then and Now*, which will go on sale in 2011. Just some of the suggestions for the celebrations so far include a parade, a community picnic in Bowness Park, baseball games, a history contest, readings at the library, a Strawberry Tea and bake sale, tree planting, and historic tours in Bowness.

The Historical Society is drawing together various groups interested in sponsoring and organizing events, and welcomes your ideas for this year-long celebration. For further information or to join a planning group, please contact Carole Carpenter at kjell@shaw.ca.



Bowness Railway Community Garden

SNAPSHOT #4:
A NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN

A new community garden has sprung up in Bowness. The Bowness Railway Community Garden near 66th Street and Bowness Road is a great example of neighbours taking action together. The gardeners first met in April, and they have since been helping each other seed, water and weed the 30 plots in the garden. Two gardeners have volunteered to coordinate the group's activities with support from the Calgary Horticultural Society's Community Garden Network Coordinator. The group also met several times with Caroline Giles, a master gardener who has been their volunteer gardening coach. Volunteers from Simon House Recovery Centre picked up and delivered four wooden benches to the garden, which now provide a perfect resting place for the gardeners. The next step for the garden is to create three artistic signs, and gardeners would like your help. If you would like to be part of this project, please contact Alan Horn by phone at (403) 512-4336 or by email at pcurbanyouthworx@gmail.com.

SNAPSHOT #5:

UPGRADES AT THE SPORTSPLEX

Bowness is one of Calgary's older neighbourhoods and some of its facilities are showing it. In the Bowness Vital Signs survey, residents said that they wanted to see the existing facilities fixed and new ones developed. The Bowness Community Association considered this when they made plans to upgrade the community centre. During the past year, the concession area of the Sportsplex received a minor facelift, and the new paint job was the first step in creating a gathering place for parents who bring their children to the facility for various activities. A new operator was brought in to provide coffee and snacks. Meanwhile, plans are underway for the main hallway, including new flooring and new wall colours to brighten up the space and make it more welcoming. Upgrades for the upstairs washrooms are also being explored, and discussions are underway on how to make the main hall more desirable as a special event venue.

SNAPSHOT #6:

SPORTS AND RECREATION

Bowness is known for its strong hockey and soccer programs, and there is even an annual three day cycling event, Le Tour de Bowness. However, yoga, Pilates, karate, and other fitness programs were identified in the Vital Signs Action Plan as some other means to improve the health and well-being of Bownesians. Since then, a number of opportunities for local yoga classes have become available. Throughout the winter, the upstairs boardroom at the community centre was the site of weekly yoga classes, and this group has since moved to the Irish Cultural Centre. A drop-in group also met in Bowness Park during the summer months. Check out www.yogainbowness.com for details about these classes.

SNAPSHOT #7: **NEVER TOO LATE GED PROGRAM**

According to 2006 federal census results, 26 per cent of Bownesians aged 15 years and over held no certificate, diploma or degree, while the citywide rate was 18 per cent. For this reason, Bowness is fortunate to have a program called Never Too Late, which helps adults living in Bowness and nearby communities complete their Grade 12 Equivalency Diploma (GED).



Never Too Late Graduating Class of 2011

For a full high school semester, students receive GED preparation in five courses, funding for the GED exam, extra tutoring, and other social and emotional supports that will help them succeed. This combination greatly increases the success rate for adults who write the exam.

Since 2006, 96 adult learners have completed their high school equivalency in this program. Never Too Late is ideal for anyone who wants to pursue higher education, new employment or career paths, or a positive life change. For more information about Never Too Late, contact Catholic Family Services at 403-233-2360.

SNAPSHOT #8: **AN EVENING GATHERING PLACE**

The Bowness Vital Signs surveys reflected Bownesians' concern with the lack of an evening gathering place. While there are local restaurants open during the evening hours, residents were more interested in the availability of a place to simply meet up for coffee and conversation with friends. The management of the local coffee shop, Cadence Coffee, decided to respond to this request for later hours. Starting on May 15, Cadence extended its hours to 7:30pm on an experimental basis to see whether locals would enjoy coffee and selections from a dinner menu throughout the week. These new summer hours extended for 100 days. Based on an assessment of the community's response to this change, management will decide whether to try this experiment again in 2011. Please share your thoughts about this with the Cadence staff next time you visit.



Cadence Coffee

SNAPSHOT #9: **IMPROVING SAFETY IN BOWNESS**

When people are connected and involved, their communities are safer places to live. This is the thinking behind the re-establishment of a Community Block Watch Program in Bowness. Its purpose is to create a network of neighbours who can identify suspicious activities and report them. A volunteer Captain has agreed to lead the program, and the group is now looking for more streets to join them.

The Bowness Safety Task Group has also been formed to bring together residents interested in building a safe community. The Task Group works with police, by-law and community members to implement crime prevention strategies for Bowness, and meets monthly to explore solutions to crime problems in the neighbourhood. If you'd like to be involved or simply updated on its progress, please register at www.calgaryblockwatch.com.

For further information about either the Bowness Community Block Watch program or the Bowness Safety Task Group, please call 403-509-2565.

SNAPSHOT#10: **FIRST ANNUAL HARVEST FAIR**

The First Annual Harvest Fair was started by a resident as part of the Bowness Vital Signs Action Plan. It was held on September 11, 2010 at the Boys and Girls Club and adjoining mall parking lot. Designed as an old time country fair, the event brought together around 250 community residents interested in growing and preserving their own food. More than 40 volunteers were involved

in organizing the fair, which included a produce swap and sessions on canning and preserving, fermenting food, and apartment gardening. Information was also provided on community gardening, garden matchmaking and guerrilla gardening. Organizations that support growing food locally were on hand to talk about their services. Children enjoyed crafts, old-fashioned races, and creating mini greenhouses, which hopefully will inspire them to develop green thumbs and continue to participate in future Bowness Harvest Fairs.



Produce from the Harvest Fair

Snapshot #11:

'COMMUNITY BELONGINGS' PUBLIC ART



'Community Belongings', created by local youth

There is an exciting new piece of public art in Bowness. Titled Community Belongings, it is the brainchild of local artist Nikki Gour. She led a workshop at Y.E.A.R.'s Annual Youth Block Party on April 30, where youth artistically expressed their feelings about Bowness on individual puzzle pieces.

The result was 75 colourful

and unique pieces. These young people worked together at the Bowness Boys and Girls Club to prepare the puzzle pieces for installation, painting the sides and back of each piece and applying a protective coating for weather-proofing. This amazing sculpture has now been installed on the east wall of the Boys and Girls Club on Bowness Road. It was officially unveiled during the Bowness Lions Club Stampede Breakfast on July 10, 2010. Be sure to stop by and admire this incredible piece of art!

SNAPSHOT #12:

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ARTS

The Bowness Community Association supported a local artist to offer art classes for youth in the community by donating funds for art materials. The "Artin' Out" 8-week art program provided classes to children after school. It provided a place for children to freely express themselves through creating works of art in four mediums: painting, sculpture, printmaking, and drawing. Subsidies were available so these classes could be accessible for all interested children and youth in Bowness. For more information, contact Nikki Gour at 403-585-2300 or email nikki@nikkigour.com.

art!Bowmont, a collective of five visual artists living in Bowness and Montgomery, held an Art in the Park event in June. Shouldice Park was filled with paintings, sculptures, pottery, and interactive works of art as well as music. The members of art!Bowmont gather monthly to share creative ideas, aspirations and artistic illumination. For information about this collective and their upcoming events, visit www.artbowmont.com.

Snapshot #13: **REVITALIZING THE BOWEST'NER**

Respondents to the Bowness Vital Signs survey expressed concern about how difficult it was to find out what was going on in the community. By providing a revitalized Bowest'ner, the Bowness Community Association has taken action on this issue. The first edition of the new Bowest'ner appeared in residents' mailboxes in early July and was warmly received, judging from the positive feedback. Subsequent issues will be published and delivered bi-monthly. Between publications, the BCA will provide its members with updates via email; the first of these email newsletters went out in early October. The official website of the BCA (www.mybowness.com) is also designed to keep residents current with what's happening in the community.



September/October Issue of the Bowest'ner

SNAPSHOT #14: **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Bowness Community Association has a brand new Planning and Development Committee formed from the merger of the Society of Bowness Residents with the BCA. In the past, the Society has held monthly public meetings to make recommendations about planning and transportation issues. They have worked tirelessly to strike a balance between new development and maintaining the small town appeal of Bowness. Now they have relinquished their status as a Society and become a sub-committee of the BCA. This is an exciting step forward and gives Bowness a unified voice on the built environment and transportation. Any member of the BCA is welcome to join this committee. Their meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Bowness Community Hall from 7-9pm. For more information contact the Executive Director of the Bowness Community Association at (403) 991-8301.



Community clean-up in Bowness

Snapshot #15:

BOWNESS COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP

Once again, the Bowwest Community Resource Centre has taken the lead in organizing a community clean-up. Although 2010 was the ninth year of this annual event, Bowwest intensified their efforts to recruit volunteers this year. These volunteers were able to “learn the ropes” and can now take on more leadership the next time around.

The clean-up itself succeeded in clearing out many items, including old computers, used tires, and other junk. A number of youth came out and volunteered on the actual day of the clean-up, and with everyone’s support, the clean-up was very successful. However, Bowwest is still on the lookout for Bownesians who are particularly keen to have a clean community. The call for volunteers to help plan the 2011 Community Clean-Up has already gone out, and Bowwest would love to hear from you at 403-216-5346.

Snapshot #16:

THE SECOND ANNUAL BOWNESIANS’ PICNIC

A bit of rain didn’t dampen the fun for those at the second Annual Bownesians’ Picnic on July 18, 2010 at Baker Park. This year’s picnic grew from the first one held in August 2009. Approximately 900 guests came throughout the day, with around 500 picnickers on the hillside during its peak. Seven bands played to the appreciative crowd, including the host band and event organizer, The Bownesians. Local youth appeared between the main acts to entertain with their amazing guitar and fiddle reels.



Picnickers enjoy sun and great music in Baker Park

The City of Calgary provided a bouncy tent, mini-golf, and other fun activities, and youth leaders were on hand to get kids involved. Several local businesses were sponsors, and the Bownesians provided food through the funds they raised. The Bowness Lions Club volunteered their time and equipment and did their usual superb barbecuing. Best of all, more than \$800 was raised for the Bowness Boys and Girls Club.

SNAPSHOT #17:

BOWNESS SMALL GRANTS INITIATIVE

A new grants initiative is planned for later this year to support residents of Bowness who want to undertake small neighbourhood improvement projects. Several organizations are working together to establish the initiative, including the Bowness Community Association, United Way, BowWest Community Resource Centre, The City of Calgary, The Calgary Foundation, Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary and other local organizations. These grants will be available for projects that are led by and involve local residents and have a clear benefit to the neighbourhood.

THESE ARE ONLY A FEW OF THE ACTIONS THAT ARE BEING TAKEN IN BOWNESS TODAY. THERE ARE MANY MORE IN THE WORKS AND MANY THAT WE HAVEN'T HEARD ABOUT. THANKS TO ALL THE RESIDENTS, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES WHO HAVE TAKEN ACTION AND USED THE VOICES OF BOWNESS REPORT AS A STEPPING STONE TO MAKING BOWNESS A STRONGER AND MORE VIBRANT NEIGHBOURHOOD. THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN BOWNESS, CONTACT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE BOWNESS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AT (403) 991-8301.

OR VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.MYBOWNESS.COM



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