

HEY NEIGHBOUR FINAL REPORT

November 2017 - December 2018

Prepared by
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Resident Animators:

Juliana Santo

Akiko Sasagi

Harry Peterson

Vincent Lee



Building Management:

Bev Greene - Concert Properties

Penny Hall - Concert Properties

Peter Lee - Concert Properties

Cyrus Navabi - Qualex-Landmark Group

Sandy Banns - Qualex-Landmark Group

Chris Gan - Qualex-Landmark Group



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PROJECT COORDINATOR INTRODUCTION

It seemed important to start the Final Report for Hey Neighbour with a reflection and a story, given the nature of this work.

My work with Hey Neighbour emerges from my own personal experience with social isolation and segregation, a troubled history and profound loneliness. As I see it, as cities grow, so does the intensity of our senses, causing us to feel tired, sluggish and unable to have a more balanced social life. The heightened demand on our time and energy along with a constant need to learn new ways of keeping up with the world can cause us to have “social fatigue” which can lead to isolation and loneliness.

When I first read the Vancouver Foundation’s Connections and Engagement Report in 2012, I was working in the disability community as a Community Connector. My role involved exploring socially innovative ways to support people with diverse abilities to develop, explore, and self-determine methods for connection to the communities they desired to be a part of. During this experience, I drew from John McKnight and John Kretzmann’s Asset-Based Community Development principles, along with many other methodologies that came to be applied to the work with Hey Neighbour.

PROJECT COORDINATOR INTRODUCTION

Yet my Connector work came to a halt after I kept witnessing the swift breakups of new connections and friendships with the participants. They made friends as quickly as they lost them. It was then I realized that the work of connecting must focus on building relational resilience. When relationships are able to weather disagreements and conflict without permanently impacting the connection, both personal and community resilience increases. With this discovery, I saw a heightened need to re-examine how neighbours manage multiple forms and styles of relationships, especially within the diversity of our socio-cultural experiences.

Hey Neighbour explores and challenges the ways that resilience can be woven through neighbourly relationships. We hypothesized that there was value in supporting resident-led activities within buildings, as a step towards building place-based relational resilience.

This final report represents the collective efforts of many who care about community, who recognize the power of neighbours and are passionate about building relationships that are symbiotically resilient. While the journey has taken us this far, we also know we have much more to do.

Enjoy the report and we hope to bring you new stories and findings in the future.

Francis Heng, Dec 2018

STORY OF HEY NEIGHBOUR

BY KELTIE CRAIG

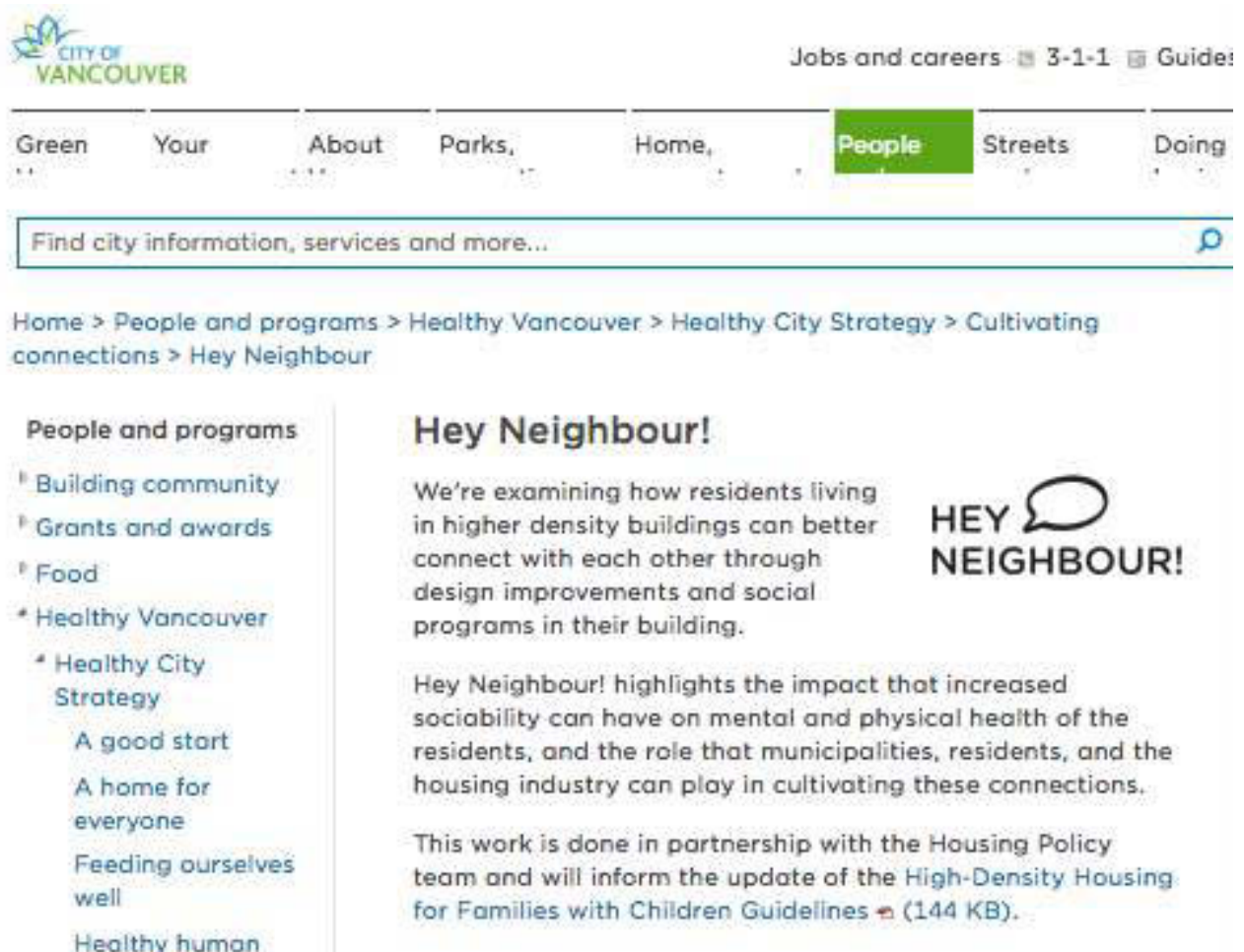
In the fall of 2017, the City of Vancouver received a grant from PlanH to run a 12 month experimental pilot aimed at increasing social connections in rental multi-unit buildings: the “Hey Neighbour” pilot. Additional funders and partners came on board, and the project got rolling.

Hey Neighbour was focused on testing potential social retrofits of existing buildings by creating Resident Animator positions in several market rental buildings. Supported by a project coordinator and advisory group, two live-in Resident Animators tested methods to develop and support social connections within rental buildings. They bridged relationships between residents, promoted involvement in activities & events, developed communication mechanisms/tools, and built capacity for other residents to assist in community-building.

Through the pilot, we hoped to learn what tools, techniques, and cultural norms can best help residents to connect in multi-unit rental buildings. By nurturing leadership from the ground-up, through empowering existing residents to come forward and take the role of Resident Animators and through building support from Building Managers and Landlords, capacity is embedded in those players in the system that are most likely to continue and lead the scale up of this approach.

STORY OF HEY NEIGHBOUR

This work is built on previous City of Vancouver explorations of the topic, including a Vertical Block Party pilot; precedent research and a resulting field trip of existing “friendly” buildings in Vancouver; and an analysis of key issues and opportunities related to social connections in multi-unit buildings based on interviews with developers and property management. In addition, there was partner-led research looking at design elements of sociability; a “social concierge” student project; and other tools. All of this is available on the Hey Neighbour webpage: www.vancouver.ca/hey-neighbour.



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People and programs

- Building community
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 - A good start
 - A home for everyone
 - Feeding ourselves well
 - Healthy human

Hey Neighbour!

We're examining how residents living in higher density buildings can better connect with each other through design improvements and social programs in their building.

Hey Neighbour! highlights the impact that increased sociability can have on mental and physical health of the residents, and the role that municipalities, residents, and the housing industry can play in cultivating these connections.

This work is done in partnership with the Housing Policy team and will inform the update of the [High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines](#) (144 KB).

HEY NEIGHBOUR!

THE BUILDINGS



The Remington
3528 Vanness Avenue
Vancouver
Concert Properties Ltd.

The Remington is a 20-storey concrete high rise located in the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood. The building consists of one and two bedroom apartments.

There are approximately 250 units with 500 residents, consisting of families, singles, seniors, and students. It is an older building that services the more affordable end of market rentals. No key fob is needed to access other floors, and a large communal laundry room and gym are in the basement.

While policy is changing to allow pets starting in 2019, at the time of the pilot, there were no pets allowed. There is one modest-sized amenities room located on the 7th floor of the building that exits out to a larger open area for gatherings and barbeques in the summer.

THE BUILDINGS

Aria

488 West 41st Avenue

Vancouver

Qualex-Landmark Group



Aria is building of 52 one & two bedroom rental apartment suites and townhomes located near the Oakridge-Cambie area. The main building has six floors, with two-storey townhouses located across a courtyard.

Like the Remington, Aria also has diverse demographics: couples, singles, seniors, students and many newcomers to Canada, including “astronaut families” (one parent moves to a new country with the children, while the other parent stays in the origin country).

The building is two years old and marketed as a boutique rental, with higher market rents. Fobs are needed to access other floors, a no-pets policy is in place, and each unit has in-suite laundry. There is no amenities room, besides a small gym.

THE RESIDENT ANIMATORS

Resident Animators (RA) are people who care about the health of their communities and believe in the importance and power available when people in the community are connected to one another.

They engage other residents in the building and explore ways they can enlist their socio-cultural assets to help foster neighbourliness.

In Hey Neighbour, a team of intergenerational residents paired up in each building, and received support from a Project Coordinator. The pilot took place from March until December (The Remington) and June until December (Aria), 2018.

THE RESIDENT ANIMATORS



Juliana Santo

Juliana has been a Remington resident for the last 2 years. She is an international student from Brazil and is currently studying at Langara College. Juliana is passionate about meeting new neighbours and cultural exchanges.

Harry Peterson

Harry is a born-and-raised Vancouverite. He is currently enjoying retirement life but finding ways to contribute to community building. He leads the Vancouver Traveling Band, a marching band that has performed around the world.



Akiko Sasaki

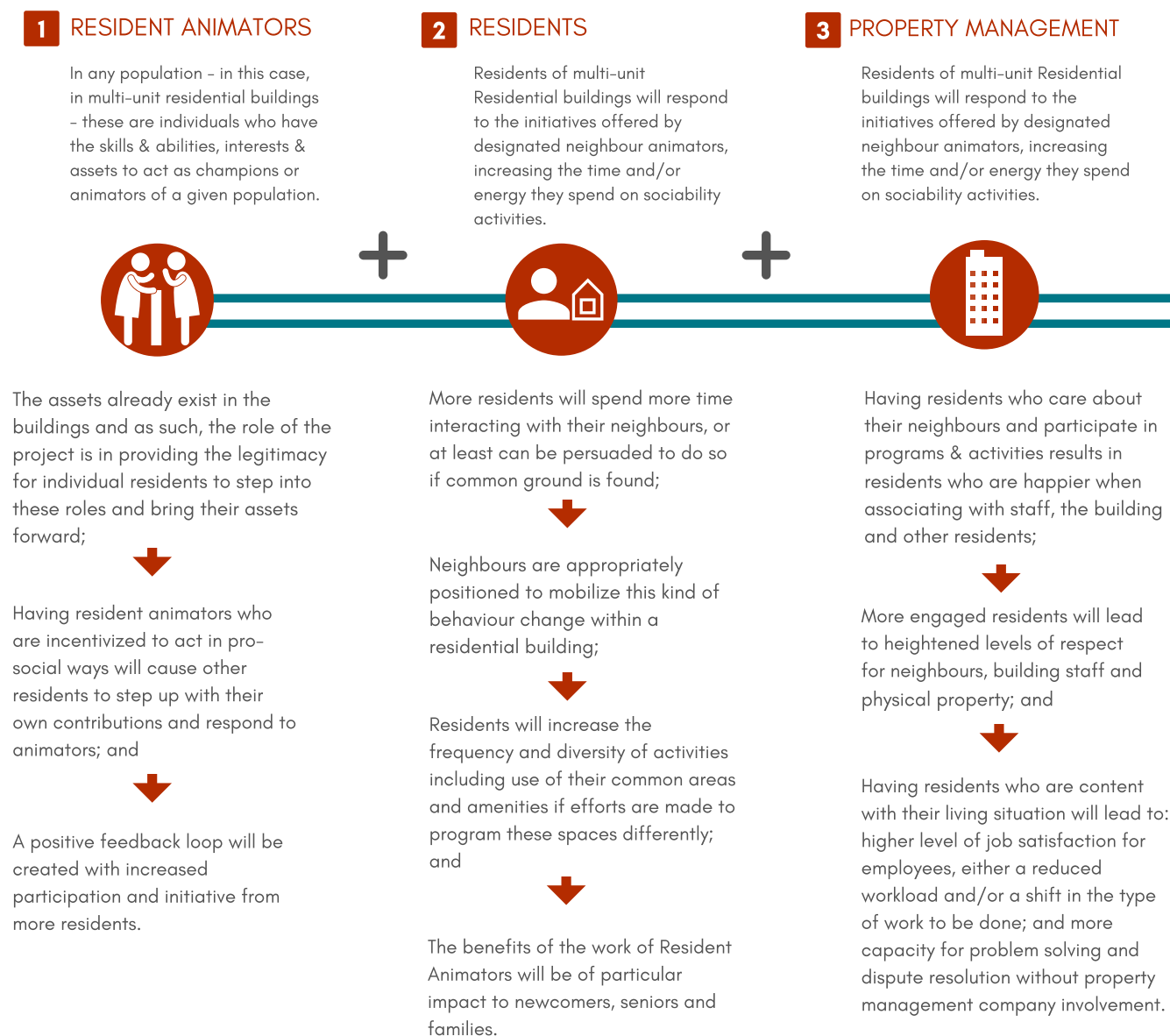
Akiko and her family moved from Japan to Vancouver where she is the main caregiver at home to her kids. Although shy and gentle, Akiko is very keen to meet neighbours and help create a more connected community in Aria.

Vincent Lee

Vincent and his family have resided in Aria for the last 2 years. He currently attends a local high school and is very passionate about meeting neighbours. Since becoming a Resident Animator with Akiko, he developed a strong friendship with Akiko and her family.

THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change is used to describe how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It defines long-term goals, and then maps backward to identify necessary preconditions. The Theory of Change developed for Hey Neighbour is shown below, and will be used as part of a formal evaluation of the pilot being conducted through Simon Fraser University (still underway at time of writing).



THEORY OF CHANGE



Desired Overall Long-Term Outcome

Strengthening of both individual and collective social health and resilience.



Outcomes of Hey Neighbour

- Residents will have an increased sense of community within their buildings.
- Frequency and severity of loneliness will decrease among residents.
- Participating buildings will feel like home and not just a temporary place of residence.
- Residents will feel an increased sense of responsibility over common property.

OUR APPROACHES

The Hey Neighbour pilot attempted to put leadership by residents at the centre of the project. In doing so, there were several methodologies and tools that were used:

Asset-Based Community Development + Appreciative Inquiry:

a framework of communication support where the Coordinator worked with RAs and Management to flush out problems through exploring possibilities, while viewing “failures” as learning opportunities that informed the next RA-led activity.

Relational Approaches: refers to the focus on relationships.

Neighbours share more than just a relationship defined by proximity. What neighbours do and how neighbours act affect each other day-to-day. Hence, intentional efforts were made to explore ways that resilience can be built relationally (“Relational Resilience.”)

Capacity-Building: Resident Animators were invited to a 2-hour “Facilitation 101” workshop taught by PeerNetBC. The following topics and strategies were covered during the workshop, which was aimed at supporting RAs in engaging with neighbours in their buildings.

Reducing financial barriers to leadership: Community-building takes time, and the role of a first-time RA was a big ask in terms of time commitment. In recognition of this, a monthly honorarium of \$200 was provided to each RA, in addition to a small expense budget to support events and activities.

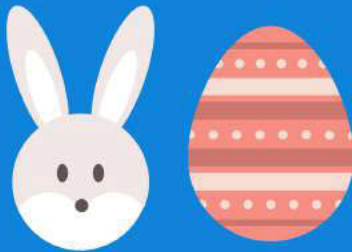
EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

THE REMINGTON

EASTER EGG HUNT

At The Remington

Bring your kids and come meet us on Saturday for coffee and a fun Easter Egg Hunt!



March 31st - 9AM
7th floor @The Remington

Easter Egg Hunt

This was the first event hosted at The Remington. The RAs decorated the Amenities Room on the 7th floor and promoted the event through event posters on every floor.

More than 30 people showed up, mostly parents and children.



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES THE REMINGTON

Hey Neighbour Chat

"Hey Neighbour Chat" was the second event that the RAs hosted. The chat brought 20 neighbours in the Remington building together to chat about ways to build a more connected community among each other.

Ideas that were shared included:

- English conversation group for residents who are immigrants
- Professional Job Finder - one resident used to help people find employment
- Running group / Walking group
- Cultural Grocers Group: Neighbours from different cultural backgrounds get together to shop at different grocery stores.
- 10th Floor BBQ
- Scavenger Hunt
- Potluck at Central Park in Burnaby

The group met again for the 2nd time 6 months later.

HEY NEIGHBOUR!

At The Remington

Come have a coffee and
chat with us!



We'd love to hear your
ideas for new activities at
the building (or outside)

April 29th - 9:30 AM
7th floor @ The Remington

HEY NEIGHBOUR!

meet your neighbours

6TH OCTOBER, 2018
SATURDAY
10AM - 12PM
COFFEE AND TIMBITS
AMENITIES ROOM (7TH FLOOR)

COME HAVE COFFEE AND DONUTS &
MEET YOUR NEIGHBOURS!

WATCH FOR BOARD GAME DAY COMING UP
ON OCTOBER 20!

HALLOWEEN ACTIVITIES FOR KIDDIES
COMING OCTOBER 31

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES THE REMINGTON

Emergency Preparedness Workshop

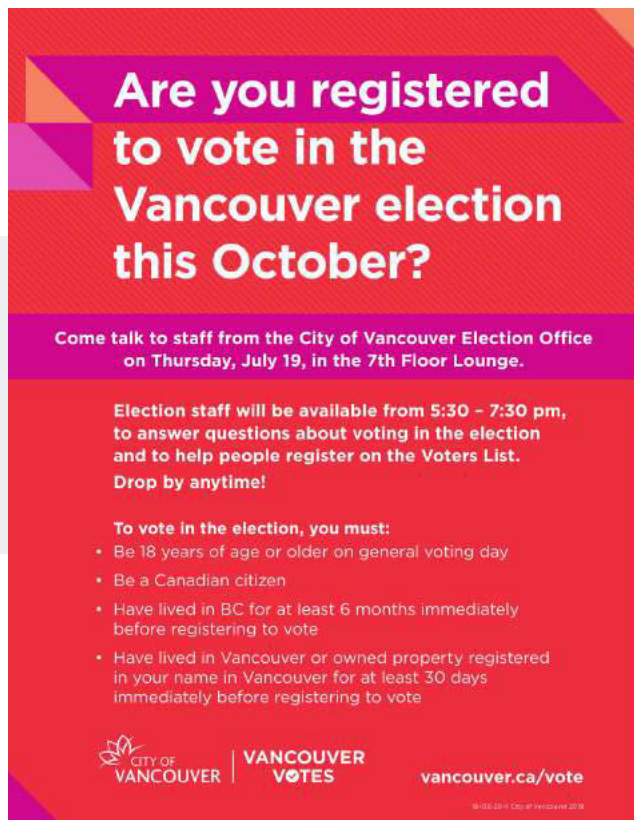
In collaboration with Collingwood Neighbourhood House, the RAs hosted an emergency preparedness workshop for residents in The Remington.

Ann Pacey, a volunteer with the City of Vancouver's Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program (NEPP) facilitated the session, sharing information with residents on what to do in the event of an earthquake.

The session attracted 10 residents who were mainly immigrants who spoke more than one language.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

THE REMINGTON



Municipal Election Voter Registration

In collaboration with the City of Vancouver Elections Office, the RAs invited 2 staff members to host a booth for residents learn about voter registration for Vancouver's municipal election. The booth was also an exploration on what would be needed to engage residents in buildings.

In spite of the efforts in promoting the event, it was attended by 6 residents who were very interested in the elections. The staff from the Elections Office reported that they had very stimulating conversations with these 6 residents.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

THE REMINGTON

Concert Properties

Tenant Appreciation Day

Concert Properties hosted a Tenant Appreciation Day for five of the buildings (Remington being one of them) they manage during the summer and it was the first time the RAs were part of the event as fellow hosts, and also responsible for two additional activities –

One of the RAs provided lemonade to neighbours and the other brought in The Vancouver Traveling Band for a special performance. As a result, interest was generated among the five buildings and there are residents asking how they can get involved in Hey Neighbour.



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

THE REMINGTON

Board Games Day

The board games day got neighbours who were interested in games to bring their games on a Saturday morning. Neighbours brought fun games including one involving sushi.

There were 4 tables of game-playing going on.



HEY NEIGHBOURS!

BOARD GAMES DAY

OCTOBER 20TH, 2018
SATURDAY
11AM - 1PM
AMENITIES ROOM (7TH FLOOR)

WE NEED MORE BOARD GAMES!
If you have a board game, we would love for you to bring and host a game session!

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES THE REMINGTON

Halloween

Resident Animators took the opportunity to decorate the Amenities Room with Halloween decorations.



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

ARIA



Lemonade Stand

inaugural building event. The RAs reused a free lemonade stand and enlisted the help of other residents to help with the event.

One of the RAs who is from Japan introduced origami as part of the experience. The event attracted parents and kids and it was the first time the lobby was utilized by residents as a gathering space.



The RAs and a helpful neighbour who responded to the call decorated the lobby, served lemonade to other residents

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

ARIA

Aria Annual BBQ

The Aria Annual BBQ is a summer event where building management invites Aria residents to gather and have food together.

With the support of the building manager, the RAs introduced fun trivia games and handed out prizes to residents.

This event also featured a new "Passive Animator", the **CONVERSATION BOARD**.



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

ARIA



Conversation Board

The Conversation Board was an idea to engage busy residents who don't always have the time or feel comfortable to participate in building events. The use of the Conversation Board had supported the RAs to still "connect" to other residents by a weekly posting of an interesting question. The board was also used as an information board to let residents know of upcoming events. The results had been and continue to be overwhelmingly positive.

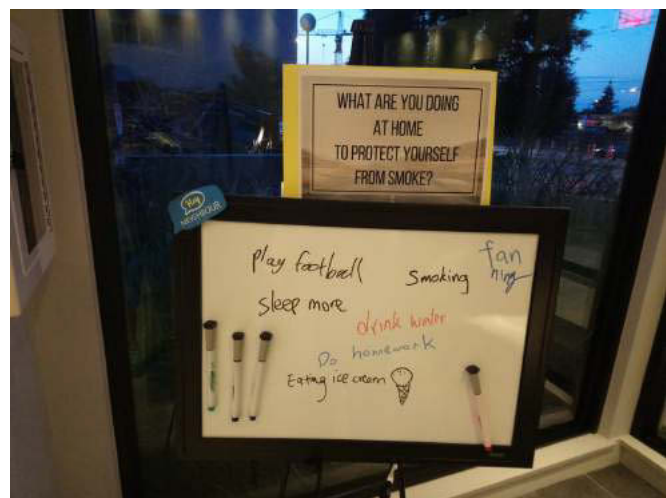
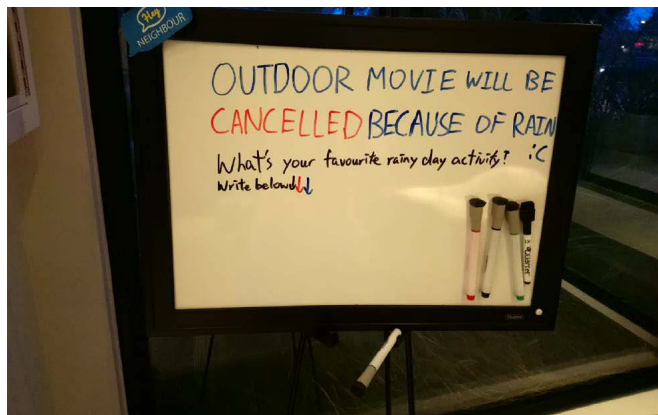
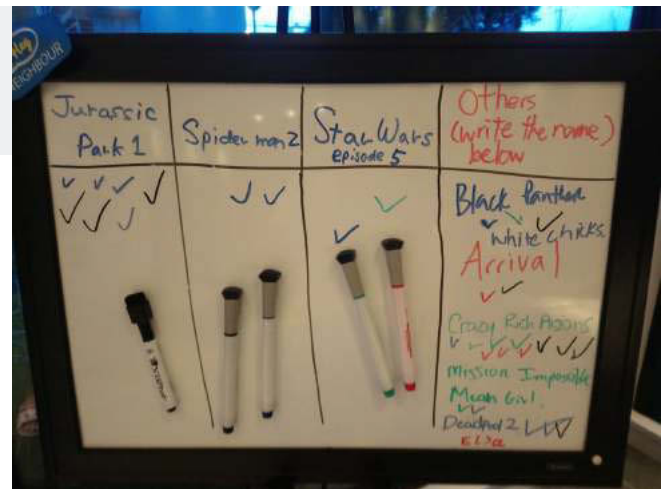
"I've seen more tenants spending more time talking to each other like here for example in the lobby, if they see the conversation board they hang around there they talk about the question...normally when tenants go into the building they head straight for the mailbox, they get their mail, they go into the elevator and go to their units. But because that board is there, it's a tool, for the tenants to talk about something to make it a fun conversation and connection." - Chris Gan, Aria Manager

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

ARIA

Outdoor Movie Nights

During the summer, the RAs decided to take advantage of summer and hosted TWO Outdoor Movie events for Aria residents. Unfortunately, both events had to be cancelled due to heavy rains and smoke pollution. The RAs used a mix of postering, slipping printed "tickets" under each resident's door (with support from building manager) and used the Conversation Board to ask residents what they would want to watch. When the event was cancelled, RAs took the opportunity to ask residents how they would deal with the smoke pollution.



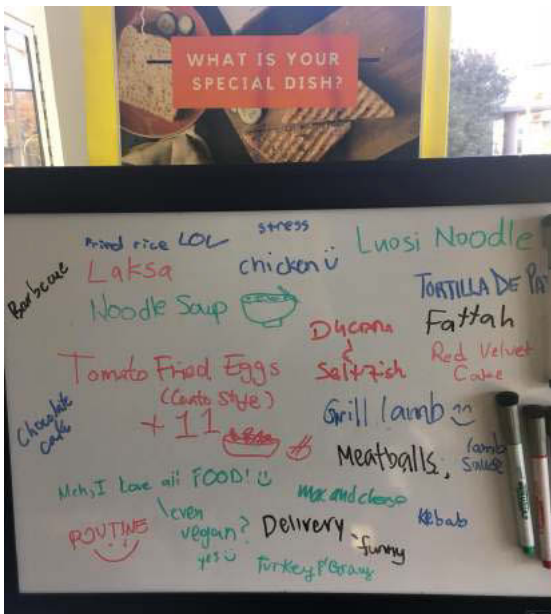
EVENTS & ACTIVITIES



Mochi Making Class

One of the RAs had an idea to share food from their culture and thought of teaching neighbours how to cook Mochi Balls, a dish common in Japan, at her own home. The first event did not get any attendance and hence, the RA tried hosting again at a different time and still no one came.

However, the Conversation Board was able to engage residents to write down what their special dish is and the response from the residents were inspiring.



Halloween

A window display for Halloween. A small wooden table holds a bottle of 'Pumpkin' liqueur, a white pitcher, a glass, and a small pumpkin. A sign on the table reads 'Take one!'. In the foreground, two large, decorated pumpkins are displayed on the floor.



PROJECT LEARNINGS PROGRAMMING

Communications

Old-fashioned postering works!

Starting with the first event in the Remington, posters were put up on every floor, and these generated attention. While we had concerns about whether the effectiveness would be reduced over time, with the current frequency (one new poster every 3–4 weeks), posters still get noticed. Consistent Hey Neighbour! branding was helpful.



Building-wide communication is still a challenge.

Neighbours expressed that facilitating communications between each other could be overwhelming for a building with more than 500 residents. RAs were hesitant to set up a formal mechanism such as a Facebook group, email list, or web-based communication platform such as thevillage.io or Bazinga. This was due to privacy concerns, a recognition of intergenerational technology gaps, and acknowledging that not everyone uses the same types of communication platforms.

PROJECT LEARNINGS

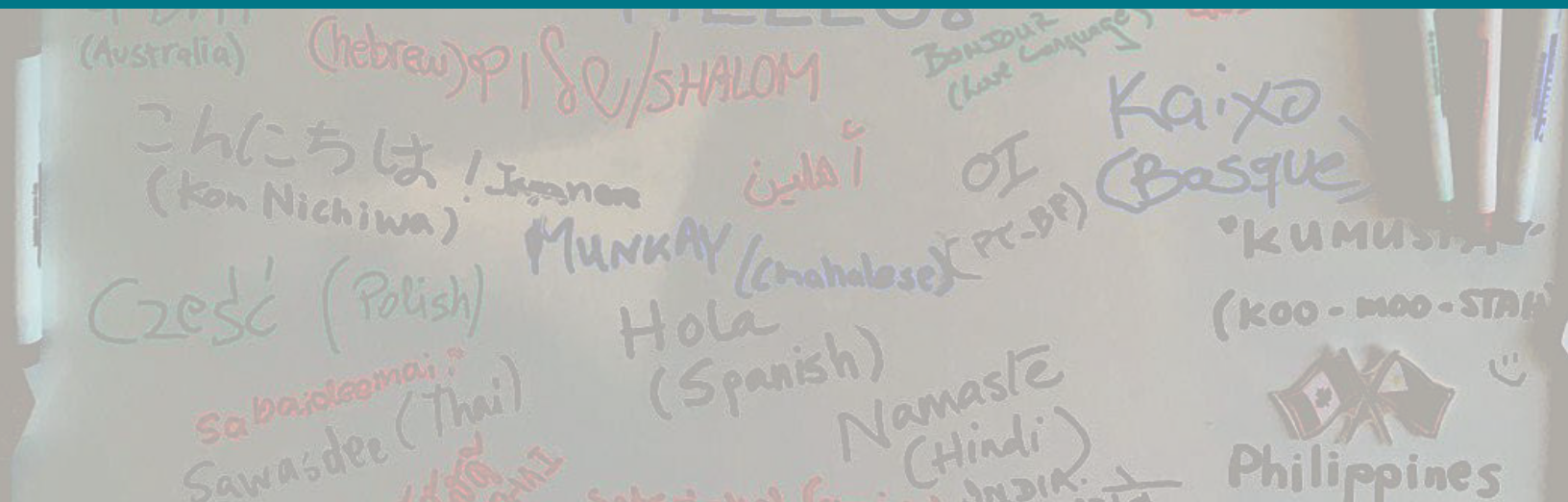
PROGRAMMING - COMMUNICATIONS

Multi-lingual residents are a huge asset.

During a discussion on Asset Mapping in relation to Emergency Preparedness, home languages used by immigrants were highlighted to be an asset in the case of emergencies – as they can quickly communicate necessary information to others in a fluent common language. Residents felt empowered to know that their language is an advantage and not a barrier for them, even though they live in a country that uses English as the main language of most communication. It should be noted however that critical information, such as that for Emergency Preparedness, can benefit from a more multilingual approach.

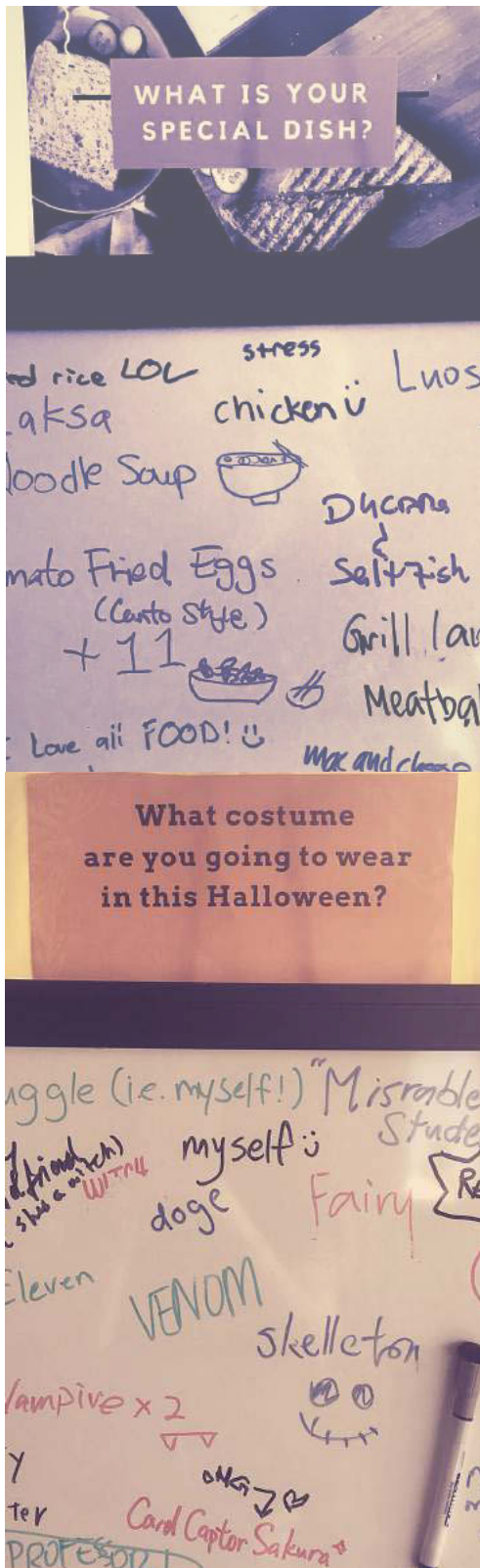
When asked about her opinion about the Hey Neighbour project and motivation to continue this collaboration, Property Manager, Penny Hall explained:

" I think that while it's a great social project, it's also a project that helps newcomers live in a building with alarm bells and elevators and recycling and all of those day to day components they might not be familiar with but it also lets people know that their cultures are welcome here...every culture is welcome and I think that's really important to have people feel that they are part of a bigger community than just their own families or the floor that they live on."



PROJECT LEARNINGS

PROGRAMMING - COMMUNICATIONS



Passive animation is a great complement to more active events.

An observation made by the building manager noted that Aria residents don't tend to have time to connect with each other, as they balance school, work and other commitments. Hence, a Conversation Board was conceived as an idea to act as a "passive resident animator."

The Conversation Board was a whiteboard placed in the lobby beside the mailboxes. The RAs would print an interesting question on it each week, and residents would write their responses on the board. The questions gathered a lot of interest from residents, and we learned that connecting with neighbours need not always be face to face.

Having a "passive animator" can be an effective "ice-breaking" tool. In addition, conversation boards can reach out to everyone, including those that don't use any form of social media platform. Using a low-tech idea, everyone is included.

PROJECT LEARNINGS

PROGRAMMING

Working In Partnership

Difference adds strength.

As a socially diverse and intergenerational group, the RAs were able to use complementary skills and backgrounds to engage different neighbours. Three of the four RAs speak a home language other than English. Two of them were born in Vancouver. One of them is recently retired and another is a parent of two children. Two RAs are currently studying at local schools.

Working together creates strong bonds.

An unanticipated impact of the project has been the level of connection that has arisen between the two RAs. Working together as purposeful project partners added a deeper layer to their relationship as neighbours, resulting in trust, friendship, and “relational resilience” that allows them to weather disagreements without permanently affecting their partnership.

With a base level of trust, independent work can emerge.

Both RAs decided that they would split up their work for one event; one running a lemonade stand and the other leading a marching band performance at the annual BBQ. This was the first time the RAs ran two activities in one event. This signified growth between the RAs to feel confident that each of them can run their own segment and they trusted each other to take care of their own activity.

PROJECT LEARNINGS PROGRAMMING

Engaging Residents

Clear, direct requests for help can provide opportunities for others to contribute.

There is a strong appetite among residents for connecting, but not everyone is comfortable or knows how. A few neighbours reached out to the RAs to offer their help for future events. In other cases, direct requests for specific assistance – such as party decorating, or for particular supplies – makes it easy for others to step up.

"I know the people that are starting to become involved and are coming out to various functions certainly come with a big smile on their face and like I say, I've made friends out of it and I managed to take two people that were relatively conservative, talk to them and find out things that they wanted to do and I was able to help get movement in those directions." – Harry, Remington Resident Animator

The social and cultural assets that immigrants bring are immense and waiting to be animated.

One of the ideas shared during the Hey Neighbour Chat was about multi-cultural grocery shopping experiences, where neighbours can go grocery shopping with their neighbours that cook ethnic food.

Where do you go to buy Brazilian food ingredients?

How are these ingredients used?

Animation related to socio-cultural assets, through purposeful resident-led programming, can activate a ripple of intercultural interactions – thus creating diversely rich social connections.

PROJECT LEARNINGS

PROGRAMMING - ENGAGING RESIDENTS

Sharing personal stories, and exposing some vulnerability, creates space for others to reciprocate.

The power of stories can transform an experience. One of the RAs shared a story of their struggle with loneliness, and a desire for community. This had a significant impact on other residents, who then revealed the same struggles and desires. How can we use the power of story sharing as a mechanism of community building among residents?

There are many ways besides words to share experiences, skills and demonstrate care.

When Akiko first found out about the Hey Neighbour! program, she did not feel confident that she would “do well” due to her limited English fluency, and did not dare to be a Resident Animator. However, after a leap of faith, she took up the role and contributed largely to the first event – a lemonade stand – through her crafting and decor skills, each decoration made with care and love, something that is distinctly a reflection of the culture she grew up with in Japan.

"I was told that the RA role is flexible and I was worried because I can't speak English well and don't have confidence of my language but with making plans for the building I am more confident. I think the good thing about our building and this program is that with Vincent I was able to make the plans while Vincent takes care of different things that I am not as comfortable with so we work together."

– Akiko, Aria Resident Animator

PROJECT LEARNINGS PROGRAMMING

PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Emergency Preparedness is a topic of interest and concern for residents.

We found that there is a huge opportunity for residents who live in high-rises to learn about emergency and disaster practices related to tall buildings. This topic can be an effective draw to bring residents together, including those who may not otherwise be interested in participating in parties or social events.

When asked how she perceived the goal of Hey Neighbour, Resident Animator Juliana responded: 'To fight this loneliness, this lack of connection that people have in buildings. I think that the main goal is to bring people together, so you know your neighbours but not just for social purpose but also for emergency situations. If you know the people in the building that could be of assistance in specific situations like natural disasters for example, it's just easier to deal with these problems together.'

RA-led events can act as informal testing grounds for the effectiveness of policies and procedures.

While conducting an Emergency Preparedness event, it was learned that emergency evacuation procedures are often too complicated for residents to read and understand. Some residents who are immigrants expressed that they lived in countries that did not have earthquakes and hence, are not familiar with what kinds of disasters might impact them, and what to do should a disaster arise. This feedback can help improve future versions of emergency-related procedures.

PROJECT LEARNINGS

PROGRAMMING - PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES

Existing resources are not widely known.

Although City resources exist on emergency preparedness workshops and material, this may not be commonly known. A resource list as part of a toolkit for management can highlight existing programs to draw from.

Seniors isolation is a growing concern, and Hey Neighbour! could help.

Management highlighted the issue of seniors being isolated in their own buildings, and wanting to find a way to address care for seniors through Hey Neighbour! and other related activities. This would help to strengthen the care for seniors in the building, especially when there is an emergency.

“The issue of social isolation or loneliness has only come to the forefront of our industry in the last 3-4 years and it started with seniors and hoarding. So property management is slowly evolving. It used to be that you were concerned with the bricks and mortar of a property and how it operated and financial aspects and pleasing clients and those sort of aspects. That was the job. It is starting to evolve because of programs like Hey Neighbour! bringing these things forward for us to think about.” – Penny Hall, Property Manager, Concert Properties



PROJECT LEARNINGS

MANAGEMENT

Building Trust

A level of trust between building manager and RAs can help remove existing barriers to connections with residents.

The policy around Amenity Room use at the Remington requires residents to book the room in advance, with residents receiving fob access only during booked times. This was a barrier to the frequency of use of the space. However, after developing a level of trust, RAs were given full fob access, allowing them to make use of the amenity room as they saw fit to support Hey Neighbour! events and programming.

Not all team members need to be present at all events.

After working with RAs on the Lemonade Stand and Aria's Annual BBQ for tenants, the manager had enough trust with the RAs that he felt comfortable letting them run the next event on their own, without his direct help, while he was away on vacation.

Even though the event did not take place due to the weather, the trust between the building manager and RAs was being established more deeply with each successive event.

PROJECT LEARNINGS

MANAGEMENT - BUILDING TRUST

Passive animation can be a low-cost way to initiate connections without taking up much of a Manager's time.

Building managers are often busy dealing with repairs and tenancies that there is little time and resources available to be dedicated to support neighbour connecting activities. The Conversation Board was an effective and cost-friendly way to engage with residents while creating buzz within the building. Trusting the RAs to take responsibility for the board helped the building manager to foster better relationships with other residents, without needing to see them all the time.

"That board was meant to notify people about events but it also acted as a way to connect people without the face to face aspect. We understand that someone might be a bit shy or not willing to participate with activities but are willing to put down their answers and share their thoughts with the building. It can be similar to an online platform where you don't know the person but you chat and connect in that different way." – Vincent Lee, Aria Resident Animator



PROJECT LEARNINGS MANAGEMENT

Complementary Roles

Building Managers and RAs can be as allies in community-building.

The building manager has been very supportive with the planning and executing of many of the events. This created a sense of excitement for RAs, to know that their building manager is also motivated to explore what it takes to create more sociability within the building. The collaboration between building manager and RAs created a new relationship, as allies in building community and not just landlord and tenant.

Power differences can't be entirely overlooked.

Managers have a responsibility to clearly articulate their support for RA roles.

There are perceived power differences in the manager/tenant relationships within the building. Residents had expressed that they don't always feel comfortable initiating building events because they thought this was an area "left to the building managers." Providing clarity on the role of the RAs, and having this communicated directly by the Building Manager, can help RAs feel more comfortable stepping into this terrain.

Create the support framework, and then step back.

Community building is something that relies on the generative connections that develop over organic and purposeful interactions. For RAs to be able to explore, experiment, engage and evaluate, a support framework that cultivates the active personal, societal and cultural assets of residents living in the building, while nourishing the richness that can happen with each other, is necessary. This means having a management-RA relationship that promotes their lead in enlivening community and management to be the deep roots that allow for resident-led initiatives to thrive; thus stepping back to allow for pleasant surprises.

PROJECT LEARNINGS

MANAGEMENT -COMPLEMENTARY ROLES

Hey Neighbour events can build energy for Management events, and vice versa.

Although the Annual BBQ was hosted by Concert as a tenant appreciation event, the RAs played a significant role in activating the event with Hey Neighbour! programming, making an impact on other residents who live in surrounding Concert buildings. These neighbouring residents are no curious about Hey Neighbour! activities and want to explore having similar activities happen within their own buildings. The building manager was elated to be able to utilize RAs' strengths and skills to support the event.



Concert Tenants Appreciation
Peter Lee, Building Manager collaborated with
Resident Animator Harry Peterson to host a
prize draw for Concert's Annual Tenant
Appreciation Event.

PROJECT LEARNINGS

BUILT FORM

Amenity Spaces

The presence of an amenity room can help...but location makes a difference.

The availability of an amenities room proved to be an important factor that contributed to the success of neighbour events. The room at The Remington was big enough to accommodate 20 people and had direct access to a rooftop garden and outdoor area with a barbeque grill. However, we learned that because the Amenities Room was out of sight (on the 7th floor), many residents did not know that it existed or that they could use the room. Would a more visible Amenities Room help to create more sociability if residents can see events going on?

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency supply storage can be an issue in high-rise buildings.

One of the issues that was expressed at the Emergency Preparedness event was that residents don't know if there are any emergency supplies located on their floor or at least close enough for them to use in the case of an emergency. Suggestions were made to consider emergency response not just to evacuations, but also if residents are stuck in the building and cannot get out.

PROJECT LEARNINGS

BUILT FORM

Retrofitting Spaces

In the absence of a designated amenity space, finding gathering spaces requires creativity.

The lobby provided a perfect spot for a temporary lemonade stand. The RAs set up the lemonade stand beside the mailbox and served lemonade to residents as they entered and exited the building. As a more ongoing feature, the placement of the Conversation Board in the lobby allowed for residents to pause and engage with the board, as well as other residents. Because it is only a mid-size white board, it does not take up a lot of space, physically and aesthetically. What other seemingly unlikely spaces could be used as a shared community gathering space, such as temporarily making use of a parkade, vacant suite, or gym?

Although physical spaces are hard to structurally change, décor and furnishing are easier to alter.

A key observation about the lobby is that it looks aesthetically pleasing, similar to a hotel, but it does not support any social interaction the ways hotel lobbies are designed to do for their customers. This highlighted the ways that lobby designs can support interactions among neighbours. How could minimal changes to furnishing or decorations in lobbies provide opportunities for more social gathering?



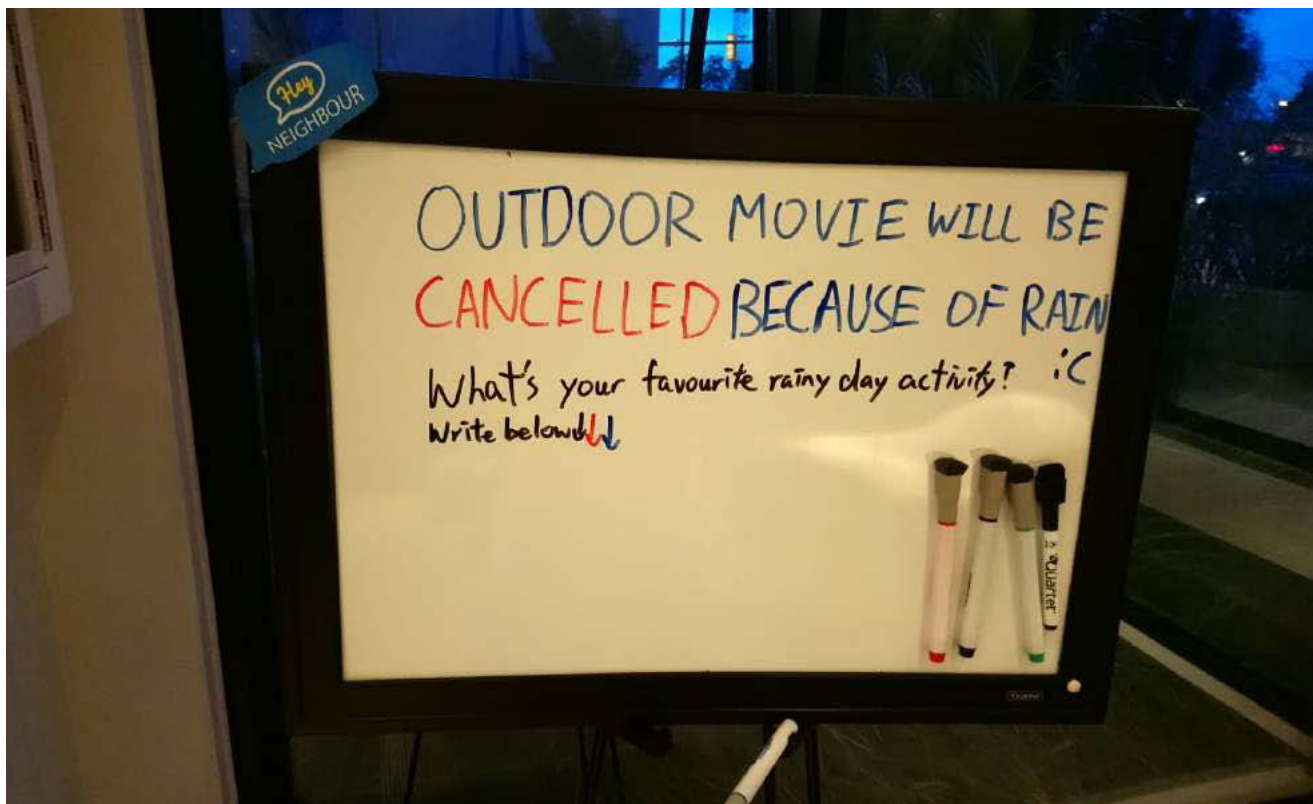
PROJECT LEARNINGS

BUILT FORM

Retrofitting Spaces

Outdoor courtyards are great community spaces...until the weather doesn't cooperate.

RAs had to cancel an Outdoor Movie event in the courtyard twice – once due to smoke, and then rain. The absence of an indoor community room prevented the RAs from shifting the event indoors. Even though there was an initial idea of hosting at homes, the RAs felt that it was something that they were not comfortable with yet but might explore in the future.



EVALUATION

The Project evaluation rested on two main components: a resident survey, and a formative evaluation. As the evaluation is still underway at the time of this report, results will be summarized in a separate document, anticipated for March 2019. However, a description of the methodology is described here.

Tenants survey

Property Management Companies typically conduct an annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey; fortunately, this was the case with both The Remington and Aria. Several additional questions relating to Hey Neighbour were included in the Satisfaction survey prior to any project activity, in order to act as a baseline. The list of questions is included below. [Scale of 1-6; 1 being “Not at all”, 6 being “Absolutely”]

1. I feel a sense of community within my building

2. I feel a sense of community within my surrounding neighbourhood

3. I feel that the events and programs offered in my building meet my needs for connecting with my neighbours.

[If respondent answers 3 or below to Question 2, the following open-ended question is triggered]

*Please share your ideas for additional events and programs in the building.

4. I feel supported to start new events or programs that help create a sense of community in my building.

5. I chose to rent with [Concert Properties/Qualex-Landmark] because [Concert/Qualex-Landmark] creates welcoming, friendly places to live.

6. It would be helpful to have a way to communicate with my neighbours, such as social media, newsletters, emails or other methods

These questions will also be included in the 2019 Tenant Survey, anticipated for the spring, which will allow for a comparison of responses over time.

EVALUATION

Formative evaluation

The formative evaluation of the Hey Neighbour project incorporates several elements. This includes the design and refinement of a program change model (Theory of Change); one-on-one and group interviews; research during activities hosted by residents; and analysis of surveys, any footage taken at organized events, and available data related to the development of the two buildings and surrounding neighbourhoods.

The results will be presented in a research report.. A formative evaluation has allowed for the evaluation of social policy innovation during all the stages of program development such that lessons could be captured throughout the process for replication in other cities and communities.

NEXT STEPS

The Hey Neighbour pilot was initiated by the City of Vancouver as a learning enterprise, to add knowledge to the field around what may support connections in multi-unit buildings. It was not intended to be run by the City as an ongoing program, and so part of the project wrap-up has included considering options for transitioning the leadership and learning of the initiative. Two strong possibilities have emerged:

Hey Neighbour Collective

Francis Heng from Hey Neighbour! has joined with two partners in a Community of Practice: Michelle Hoar, working with Catalyst Community Development Society and Stacy Barter of Resilient Streets. The partnership has applied for various streams of grant funding as the Hey Neighbour Collective. The practice partners have each been developing pilots over 2017/2018 to test ideas around building neighbourliness and connection within multi-unit buildings; the Hey Neighbour Collective (HNC) will bring these separate pilots together to draw on learnings from these early iterations and to expand the field of inquiry into 2019 and beyond.

In addition, the collective will also more explicitly introduce climate resilience work within multi-unit building communities, supported by Dr. Meg Holden, SFU Urban Studies. A large number of organizations and projects have expressed their support for the development of the Hey Neighbour Collective over the next 3 years, including:

SFU Centre for Dialogue

Catalyst Community Developments
Society

Building Resilient Neighbourhoods

Brightside Homes

Metro Vancouver Housing

SFU Urban Studies and Geography

Happy City

Vancouver Coastal Health

Landlord BC

BC Non-Profit Housing Association

City of Vancouver

City of New Westminster

NEXT STEPS

Open Source Stewardship

The City of Vancouver “Hey Neighbour” website (www.vancouver.ca/hey-neighbour) acts as a repository of related research, including this final report and the accompanying Toolkits for Residents and for Building Management. These tools are available for use by private industry, grassroots organizations, non-profits, individual residents, or anyone else that wants to learn more about supporting relational resilience in their neighbourhoods. We hope these prove helpful.

People and programs

- [Building community](#)
- [Grants and awards](#)
- [Food](#)
- [Healthy Vancouver](#)
 - [Healthy City Strategy](#)
 - [A good start](#)
 - [A home for everyone](#)
 - [Feeding ourselves well](#)
 - [Healthy human services](#)
 - [Making ends meet and working well](#)
 - [Being and feeling safe and included](#)
 - [Cultivating connections](#)
 - [Hey Neighbour](#)
 - [Active living and getting outside](#)
 - [Lifelong learning](#)
 - [Expressing ourselves](#)
 - [Getting around](#)
 - [Environments to thrive](#)

Hey Neighbour!

We’re examining how residents living in higher density buildings can better connect with each other through design improvements and social programs in their building.



Hey Neighbour! highlights the impact that increased sociability can have on mental and physical health of the residents, and the role that municipalities, residents, and the housing industry can play in cultivating these connections.

This work is done in partnership with the Housing Policy team and will inform the update of the [High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines](#) (144 KB).

[Learn how we’re updating the guidelines.](#)

Pilot project

Supported by [planH](#), we’re conducting a pilot project to learn what tools, techniques, and cultural norms can best help residents to connect in multi-unit buildings when design improvement is not possible.

Residents from two purpose-built rentals will be given an opportunity and a small

Who’s in your network?

A target of the [Healthy City Strategy](#) is for all Vancouverites to have four people in their network that they can rely on.

[Hey Neighbour!](#)

CONCLUSION

A Final Reflection - From the Coordinator Francis Heng

I have lived in buildings for over 35 years. I grew up in buildings and had intimate experiences and reflections about immediate social ecosystem that comprises of the neighbours on the floors that I had lived on.

Between the ages of 5 – 20, I relied heavily on neighbours. When my parents had to work, I stayed at my neighbour's until they came home. When I came home from school and forgot my key, my neighbour took me in and cooked me lunch. When I was having trouble with my parents, my neighbours came over to help. My neighbours were my social network and support.

Watching my parents interact with my neighbours taught me the importance of being good at conversation and managing relationships, because when all else fails, we have our relationships. In the event of a disaster, relationships matter even more. In the wake of the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami, neighbours helped out one another and it was the power of connectedness and in each other that Japan found hope and resilience.

CONCLUSION

I believe that we are experiencing a profound evolution that is giving new meaning to what it means to be neighbours, in light of the various social and cultural movements and tensions around the world. The alarming reports of increased social disconnectedness, isolation, loneliness, comes also at a time when we are trying to understand how best to live with each other, as we scour for new paradigms of communication and understanding of each other as interconnected people. I was deeply inspired by the level of care and passion that they have with connecting neighbours. Their creative assets and willingness to risk makes me feel hopeful that we can begin to change cultures in impactful ways.

Hey Neighbour is what I think as “Neighbours Helping Neighbours Be Connected Neighbours.” This pilot project is only the beginning of what can still be further explored with residents. We’ve only scratched the surface on what we can do with strengthening sociability in high-rises in Vancouver; that we can all, residents, managers, developers and policy makers can work together to change the story of Vancouver being a lonely, transient city to one that is vibrant and strong in our relationships with each other.

Francis Heng

Hey Neighbour Project Coordinator – December 2018

