13. NEIGHBOURHOOD WEEK 2000

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The purpose of this report is to is to seek support for Neighbourhood Week 2000 and invite community boards to carry out some advance planning as to their contribution to the event.

BACKGROUND

In 1997, following the presentation of the concept of encouraging better neighbourhoods in a report to the Shirley/Papanui Community Board, the idea of holding a week during which people were encouraged to introduce themselves to their neighbours was initiated. Modern life often means that contact with neighbours is less spontaneous than in days gone by. More people work during the day and there are fewer people at home. Childcare facilities mean less young children to bring parents together. High fences make it difficult for people to see their neighbours. Cars isolate us to and from our shopping, schooling and working. Stranger danger and road safety concerns mean children do not wander as freely as we did when we were young. Neighbourhood Support Groups have lapsed and new people moving in are not contacted by anyone.

All community boards were invited to participate and a variety of events were held throughout the City in the first week of March 1998.

Neighbourhood Support Groups were seen as crucial in strengthening neighbourhoods, being small, personal groups of five to ten households in close proximity to each other. The Shirley/Papanui Community Board employed a person to work with the Police and update the list of Neighbourhood Support Group co-ordinators Citywide. The task of maintaining the database and adding to the number of groups is now part of the Community Constables' role.

DATE

Late in 1999 it was agreed by most community boards that October would be a better time of year to hold the Week as the March event clashed with other metropolitan events. The new Committee with representatives from all Boards has met and the decision has been made to hold Neighbourhood Week from Saturday, 28 October to Friday, 3 November.

PREPARATION

The joint Board Committee sees its role as promoting the concept of the Week and advancing suggestions that community boards and Council business units may wish to adopt. Some advance media promotion will be arranged for the local newspapers, community noticeboard on television, radio, and an insertion in 'City Scene'. The event is also to be brought to the attention of the Police, the National Council of Women (to coincide with its 'Think Fencing' campaign), residential homes for elderly people and schools.

It is anticipated that each community board will approach the Week in a different way. The Board's representatives on the Committee will very likely have several creative suggestions for events or projects that would be appropriate in their wards. However, some suggestions brought forward to date include an information kit provided to Neighbourhood Support Groups (its content still to be decided), subsidy towards neighbourhood parties, photocopying services to neighbourhood groups, and creative ideas for recycling.

The joint Board Committee discussed funding for such projects and events and their associated publicity and it was agreed that they would fit well within the criteria for the additional $30,000 SCAP (Strengthening Communities Action Plan) funds soon to be made available to each board. Boards may wish to include some publicity in their residents' groups newsletters.

As noted above, all Council units are to be advised of the event, with the thought that some project or initiative may be linked with Neighbourhood Week. Last year the City Streets Unit promoted a "Walk a Child to School Week" to coincide with the Week. Such events help in giving a wider exposure to the Week and may themselves enjoy double exposure via the media.

Recommendation: That the Board set aside funding towards events and projects for Neighbourhood Week from 28 October to 3 November 2000 and work towards a plan of activities for its area.