



August 2021

Background

[Engaged Communities](#) was established in late 2019 in Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park by residents and community organizers to harness the power of youth and their transformative influence in society. We have enjoyed a successful first 2 years supporting local communities with key issues relating to health, housing, education, and employment.

Vision

A community where residents of all ages, backgrounds and cultures, along with local partner agencies, cooperate and share power — and the responsibility — to improve their neighbourhood.

Priorities

1. Youth violence prevention
2. Youth development through education, training, and employment
3. Mobilizing community voices to address issues that are important to local people

You can read more in our [Terms of Reference](#).

Every week residents, community organizers, and agency staff from across Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park meet to discuss current challenges, and strategize on Engaged Communities' work priorities. Our [meeting notes are publicly available online](#). Before the pandemic we met in person at The Neighbourhood Organization's offices. During COVID we have been meeting virtually.

Projects:

Supporting youth

- [Stronger Together Project](#): A team of Engaged Communities members developed workshops for 10 youth to meet over 1 month in the Spring of 2021. Youth facilitators and participants discussed strengths and strains in the local community, and what we



can do about local challenges. A few youth are continuing work on their projects. A participant is now working on publishing material from the workshops on our website.

- Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute (MGC) Co-op Students: Engaged Communities has mentored three MGCI co-op students in 2020/21, providing the opportunity to work on several projects including Stronger Together; the importance of the federal census and local enumeration challenges; and running safe, outdoor in-person fun events for youth during Covid. We have supported students to connect with leaders in the community to learn about different professions.
- We have developed and are starting to implement work plans to strengthen the connection between local schools and communities, including helping to recruit more parents to school councils and empowering parents to better advocate for their children at school.

Mobilizing Community Voices

- Connected directly with Syrian youth and parents to learn about their concerns, and desires. We have discussed their needs and provided supports to address two key concerns:
 - youth violence between different communities at the end of 2019,
 - the effects of Covid in 2020
- Helping with community concerns about the impact on Thorncliffe Park of the proposed Metrolinx train yard. [Read more](#)
- The #SaveFlemo campaign, supporting residents who are fighting against new condo developments at 25 St. Dennis Drive. See [here](#)
- Helped the [Thorncliffe Park Autism Support Network](#) (TPASN) with an Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) grant submission.
- Helped [Youth of East York](#) with a few of their projects:
 - [Elephant in the Room: Addressing Community Violence](#)
 - Supported funding application for a Spring 2021 Wellness Event
- Weekly Email Updates - assist in spreading Community Initiatives, projects, flyers to strengthen community voices.



Covid Support

- Developed a [Q&A](#) that was positively received by community partners and helped with the communication strategy early on in the Covid pandemic.
- Instagram videos to support the message for social distancing and wearing masks
- Within the Q&A document - created a flyer for landlords and tenants which was shared with the politicians and all provincial legal clinics
- Worked on an early vision of what became the Health Access Thorncliffe Park Covid hotline - one number that any local can call to get support regarding Covid: 647-477-1640
- Provided some funding to member Abdul Rashid Athar's [Steps Challenge](#) for the summer, which helped continue engagement with walking groups, encouraging them to get out and move during the pandemic
- Exploring youth vaccination concerns: worked with a local youth to research Thorncliffe and Flemingdon youth vaccination. presentation [Presentation](#), [write-up](#), [all material](#)

Other

- Engaged Communities worked with Thorncliffe Park Autism Support Network (TPASN) to put on a "LET'S TALK" event on Indigenous People's Day on June 21, 2021 titled "Intergenerational Trauma: Break the Chain". Our [presentation](#) and the [video](#), along with [resources](#), were shared and the goal is to continue these conversations and strengthen relationships between the community and local Indigenous peoples
- We have a social media presence including an [Instagram account](#) where we share information that is relevant and helpful for our communities.

Achievements and recognition

- In 2021, the Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario (ACLCO) recognized the work of Engaged Communities and Omar Khan specifically through its [Community Champion Award](#) for his "outstanding leadership and advocat[ing] tirelessly for Youth, Refugees, Newcomers, Seniors and many facing homeless situations in Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park in Toronto.

Questions or Comments

- We welcome people to contact us with any questions, comments or feedback on how we can be more effective. Please email our coordinator, Omar Khan at omar.khan@gmail.com