

# Sharing Experiences: City of Waterloo Neighbourhood Summit

In February 2020 we launched a new outreach program to connect with our communities. It is important for the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery to welcome and engage with the diverse communities of the Waterloo Region. On invitation, various groups come to the gallery and communicate a lived experience through a free workshop in clay. The lived experience is based on themes discussed with the leaders and the participants of each community group.

The work created is then presented to the community at large with an exhibition and a publication. The seventh community group we invited was the City of Waterloo Neighbourhood Summit.

We thank John and Rebecca Short for their support of this program. We do hope that this program will not only allow us to strengthen the existing bonds between our gallery and community partners we already have, but also new ones and allow for new friendships to be forged between the participants.

## Denis Longchamps, PHD

Executive Director and Chief Curator,  
Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery

Through the Sharing Experiences workshop, neighbours from across Waterloo came together to reflect on their neighbourhoods and the special places within them. Each year, the Neighbourhood Summit with the City of Waterloo gathers neighbours to celebrate and collaborate in exploring new ways to create more vibrant, connected, and caring neighbourhoods. With clay, neighbours shaped tealight holders that represent spaces that bring them joy in their community: whether it was a local park featuring their furry friends, or a little library along their travel route each day, the creations share places where neighbours feel welcome and included. Throughout this session neighbours were able to build connections with each other, learn and share their unique experiences, and create meaningful pieces of art. The City of Waterloo is grateful for the support from the Clay and Glass Gallery for this event.

## Julie Legg

Supervisor, Neighbourhood Services  
Community Services, City of Waterloo



## Debika Basu

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

When I see cats around, because cats are very comfortable in their own space. They do not go to the unknown but they do explore the unknown. Which I also think I am because I would always go to unexplored places. I would love to see and feel what is around. The bugs, trees and chirping of birds. The grass in dewdrops. Even snow, makes me feel I belong to this, makes me feel I belong to nature, one with nature.

**Tell us about your tea light:**

My tealight tells that you are comfortable where you are. You don't need fancy things. Just a book to read and sniff and a cat to love you is all you need. Because nature and natural things come to those who have pure heart. There is more when you look out, it's not to be found by everyone but when you look you will see leaves changing colours and cats (if you are lucky enough) stretching. Makes me lie down and enjoy the breeze, the wind into the sky.



## Brittany Neal

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

I feel connected with my neighbourhood when I go to the library, the park, and the public swimming pools. I like to go for walks on the trails. I love it when I see animals on a walk. One time I saw a swan.

**Tell us about your tea light:**

My tea light is a turtle, a duck, and a pond. The tea light sits on an island in the pond surrounded by wildlife, just like I am when I go for a walk on the trails in my neighbourhood.



## Gloria Chapman

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

I have been in my house for 64 years and am the longest on the street. My children all grew up in this house and love to come home.

**Tell us about your tea light:**

It depicts the warmth of my home.



## Joan Heaton

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

There is a courtyard joining the condo that I live in to a restaurant and grocery store. In the summer we share coffee and croissants at the many tables set up in this lovely setting.

**Tell us about your tea light:**

My tea light is in the shape of hearts as I love my home and surroundings.



## Rose N.

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

Being in my garden. My garden encourages communication between my neighbours and anyone who walks by.

**Tell us about your tea light:**

My tea light represents the light in my garden - a welcoming sign for anyone to stop and look.



## Brenda

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

It's the small, simple things - events, details, walking uptown past familiar houses, trees, bushes. Lights lit up along King St. Creek, animals, birds, bugs, flora and fauna, and people.

**Tell us about your tea light:**

Where's the fairy? Can you find her? Is everything in the mushroom world waiting for her to arrive? Or... has she already left? Or... is she home? Invisible? Or... visible only to those gifted with vision? Create your own dream world J



## Julie

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

In the morning, when I walk my dog and start my day enjoying my local park, I feel most connected to my community. I often say hi to neighbours along the way and enjoy the peaceful nature before the bustling day.

**Tell us about your tea light:**

My design represents my morning walk in my neighbourhood. I walk my dog and then start my commute by bike through the park. It's calm amongst the trees and I often find myself reflecting on how grateful I am to live in such a beautiful and welcoming community. As Mr. Rogers' sung about, it sure is a "beautiful day in the neighbourhood" each morning.



## Anne-Marie Lesperance

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

When I think of my neighbourhood I see myself out for a walk. I see the excitement my daughter has of finding treasures in the little libraries at the edge of the sidewalk. How fun it is to walk, jump and play the games to painted at our feet. I think of people and fur babies we made on our dog walks. I am thankful for the wonderful people around us who make up our neighbourhood. I appreciate the opportunities available to me because of the city of Waterloo planning. And the experiences I am offered through thoughtful programs like the Neighbourhood Summit.

I love my city and I'm blessed to celebrate the people that make it. Thank you for the experience.



## Sushma Thimmappa

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

Whenever I pass by the park, I see those cute dogs coming out for a walk with their owners, sniffing and jumping around on the dried autumn leaves, they bring instant smile on my face. The squirrels running around collecting food for the winter and filling their mouths with nuts and all sorts of tiny leaves etc. The best part of my neighbourhood is the parks where children come out to play and the happiness they fill in the air. I can't not mention the cafes and coffee outlets which give that wonderful aroma of coffee in the air and you can't not stop having a coffee in those cozy cafes. I also love the libraries in my neighbourhood which have tons of books for everyone. I would always love to grab a book, a coffee and go to a park in my neighbourhood and call it a wonderful day!

**Tell us about your tea light:**

My tealight is a collection of things that I love in my neighbourhood. It has a maple leaf as a base and few pine cones on it. I also added some mushrooms, a plant/grass and a couple books. I added a bowl for my tealight amongst all of these cozy little things. J



## Kim Hutflusz

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

I feel a sense of belonging when I am at the neighborhood bowling alley. Whether I am throwing strikes or a gutterball everyone is having a good time together.

**Tell us about your tea light:**

Mighty light is a bowling alley with three bowling pins. One for strike, one for a spare, and one for gutterball. The bowling ball is in the gutter and the tealights is where the person would stand when they bowl. Even though the tealight is having a gutterball, the light represents the fun that the bowler is having with their friends in the community.





**Nosha Hirapara**

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

If we look into our day-to-day lives, there's always something or the other we feel like it belongs to us and give us peace. For me, when I see someone who is a generous person and gives out total positivity, makes me feel like I belong here. Sometimes when I am in the lap of nature it gives me peace, internal peace, listening to the sound of flowing water, whooshing of the trees, birds chirping and the smell of fresh grass, makes me feel at peace and I always feel like I belong here.

**Tell us about your tea light:**

"And that reflects eternal peace"

The reason I chose to make a yoga statue is because, no matter you find a piece or a place that makes you feel like you belong there, but in less you are at eternal peace, nothing is going to matter to you. I chose to be a woman, because it takes a lot to be one;

she is a mother  
she is a friend  
she is a sister  
she is a daughter  
she is a grandmother  
she is a wife

she is everything and she knows how to play every role even at the worst days one can look at her and see the smile that keeps the day running.

**Colette Dionne**

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

My neighbourhood is hard to define- "Uptown Waterloo" is what it's called but it seems just a name to define a location where everyone from anywhere can congregate, it doesn't feel special. It boasts money events festivals and stores for all.

What is special is that I have easy, quick access to all of the above, I can ride my bike to all of them because of the bike slash walking trails around me and art displayed along them is indeed special. I enjoy admiring them as I walk or ride along the trails. The clay and glass museum is one of the highlights of this neighbourhood as is the WPL and the Waterloo park.

My wish:

As other neighbourhoods have a cozy feeling of community and participation - Uptown does not. I wish neighbours would gather more and recognize each other more.

**Tell us about your tea light:**

I wanted to highlight the joy and freedom I feel riding my bike in a safe environment. Able to be in nature so close to the conservation areas, the park, the glimpse of some water ponds.



**Sarah Van Mil**

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

I moved to new neighbourhood this year, and I met a lot of people while they were walking their dog(s). Even though I don't have a dog of my own to walk (yet), I can go for a walk or be working in the front yard and people will be walking with their dogs. It's entirely possible that I know more of my neighbourhood dogs names that I do my actual neighbours.

**Tell us about your tea light:**

My tea light holder is a sidewalk with the dog. The tealight is to be placed behind the dog where a dog Walker might stand. The tealight itself represents the warmth that comes from having a friendly conversation with the person walking a dog in your neighbourhood. On the grass is a brown lump of dog poop because there is always a bit of humour involved when silly little furballs show up.



**Evelyn Leslie**

**When and where do you feel a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?**

I like to explore, and I like to connect to the world around me, but I also like quiet time to myself. So, when I go out, I bring bits of myself with me so I always feel at home and able to take a break. It also allows me to find a sense of belonging most places I go. For example, there's a tree I've sat in to write in my journal at the park. There's a street corner where I've gone to play guitar. There's coffee shops with tucked-in corners downtown, and there's stairwells I've sat under on campus to take a break and have a snack before catching a bus home after class.

**Tell us about your tea light:**

My tea light takes place under a staircase. This is somewhere I've often gone to sit to take a break where there's a sunny window and escape from the noise around me. Here I'll watch a movie or recharge, and often the result of this is my backpack spilling out around me. Here we have some of its contents, including my iPad, some headphones, my journal and a pen, my ukulele, a couple fidget toys (a tangle and a sonic screwdriver), some crystals (rose quartz, blue onyx, and amethyst), and deck of tarot cards, and a music player.



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