



STEELES L'AMOREAUX STRENGTH IN PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

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Steeles L'Amoreaux Strength in Partnership (SSIP)

SSIP is a network of organizations and residents in Steeles L'Amoreaux. It works to address community issues, connect people with resources in their neighbourhood and strengthen resident voice in shaping their community.

SSIP resident volunteer appreciation event



Residents are at the heart of SSIP's work. SSIP has been lucky to have a number of residents who have contributed their time and ideas towards serving the people of Steeles L'Amoreaux.

To thank these residents SSIP held a volunteer appreciation evening on January 22. It was hosted at the Agincourt Library and featured dinner and entertainment.

People shared their thoughts on what motivates them to be involved with SSIP and ideas on how to attract more residents to join in SSIP's work. It was also a good opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the things SSIP has achieved to date.

Many thanks to everyone who helped organize the event and of course to the residents for their commitment to Steeles L'Amoreaux!

Scarborough Community Renewal Organization kick-off meeting

On February 23 the Scarborough Community Renewal Organization (SCRO) had its kick-off meeting at the Scarborough Golf Club. It was a packed event to welcome community members to the SCRO.

The SCRO was formed through the Scarborough Community Renewal Campaign, which was started by the Rotary Clubs in Scarborough. Its purpose is to continue the efforts of the Campaign and act as a coordinating voice for Scarborough with regards to community renewal. The SCRO has a lot of energy and wants to bring opportunities here to "put Scarborough on the map."

The SCRO is looking for committee members for its eight committees: 1) Social Development, 2) Economic Growth, 3) Suburban Planning, 4) Natural Environment, 5) Arts, Cul-

ture, Tourism, and Sports, 6) Health Promotion and Seniors, 7) Administration and Planning, 8) Communications. For more information please contact: 414-944-8444 ext. 224 or rekasivarajah@hardystevenson.com.



At the launch of the SCRO, held at the Scarborough Golf Club.

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Resident profiles

In this issue we wanted to showcase some of the wonderful work that Steeles L'Amoreaux residents have done in their community over the years. SSIP Coordinator Karen Fong met with two residents and interviewed them to get a sense of their community involvement. Below is a condensed version of the interviews.

Evaline Xavier

Evaline Xavier has called Steeles L'Amoreaux home since she came to Canada from the Commonwealth of Dominica in 1991. Over the past several years she has dedicated a great deal of time, energy and resources to her community and to SSIP.

Evaline is the recipient of the Leading Women, Building Communities award from the Province of Ontario and the Golden Rule International Award from the Interfaith Peace-Building Initiative. She was also appointed an Ambassador of the Golden Rule.

KF: Can you tell us about the community work you've done over the years?

EX: Shortly after coming to Canada I became involved in my local community as a member of the Bridlegrove Bible Chapel Church. I immediately started doing outreach in my community. Through my workplace (a government organization that assists people with low-income), I have often seen the need to go the extra mile to help people. In my community I have helped people find better housing, obtain furniture and gain access to more affordable childcare. Through my church I've met parents of teens who are in difficult situations, for example youth who are in trouble with the law. I have helped them redirect their lives by, for instance, helping them go back to school. Over the years my husband and I have taken young people who have faced various problems into our home so they could have a safe place to stay while we sort through their problems.

KF: Can you tell us about how you joined SSIP?

EX: I've been involved with SSIP for about twelve years now. I started when Adair (a Community Development Officer who used to work with SSIP) came to my church seeking residents to get involved in the network. I thought that any initiative where people are trying to help others is a good thing. I felt I should contribute

even if in a small way. Adair saw the potential in me and with her encouragement I started co-chairing SSIP meetings with her. I continued to be a co-chair for a long time. I also sit on the steering committee.

KF: Are there some achievements in relation to your work with SSIP that you're particularly proud of?

EX: When Chester Le Community Corner was being built I advocated strongly for the inclusion of the daycare. I've also contributed to SSIP's scholarship fund. We were short of our target one year so we were trying to encourage SSIP members to solicit more donations. We ended up receiving more than expected and were able to offer two scholarships instead of one!

KF: What's your vision for Steeles L'Amoreaux five, ten years down the road?

EX: I hope most of the programs are able to continue, though I know it may be challenging with limited funding. However, I believe that if what you're doing is good and you're determined a way will open. SSIP has done a lot of good work. Even if not all the work is able to continue, I hope we can still support the most needy pockets of Steeles L'Amoreaux.

KF: Why do you give so much to the community?

EX: My reason for doing what I do is my love for God and humanity.

"I have often seen the need to go the extra mile to help people."



Evaline at her home in Steeles L'Amoreaux.

Ping Gu

Ping Gu immigrated to Canada from Suzhou, a city near Shanghai in China. Since coming to Canada she has been very involved in her local community and is an active member of SSIP and its sub-committees.

KF: Can you tell us a bit about your background?

PG: In 2008 I retired from my job in China as a professor of textile design and technology. I very much enjoyed my professional work. I supervised masters and doctoral students and had a lot of interaction with teachers and students. The job kept me very busy. I came to Canada in 2010 when my daughter had her fourth child. She invited me and my husband to immigrate under the family sponsorship program to help take care of her children.

KF: How did you get involved in the local community here?

PG: When I first came to Canada my first duty was to look after my grandchildren; however now that they are all in school I have much more time to do other things. I'm interested in working with people and engaging with Canadian society. In 2011 I joined a sewing program and started to meet many people. Someone introduced me to the LIP (Local Immigration Partnership) and suggested that I should be a resident representative. I joined but at first I didn't really say much at the meetings because I didn't understand very much of the discussions. However I just kept going to meetings and eventually I started to understand more and more. I gained enough confidence to start giving my input. In 2012 I became a steering committee member of LIP and joined the employment, training and education action group.

KF: What else have you been involved in?

PG: I have also been a participant of CAP (Civic Awareness Project). This program is very useful for immigrants to learn about the Canadian political system. I took part in all three sessions: gaining knowledge, building leadership skills and

taking action. I've gained a lot from participating in CAP. It has been very valuable to gain the knowledge and skills to engage deeply in Canadian society and use my voice to change the community. I have also helped to interpret for other participants of CAP. I feel I have a responsibility to be involved given my English ability. My friends rely on me to share information.

KF: What attracted you to join SSIP?

PG: I like how SSIP works as a network, a partnership. In that way it's like the LIP, only smaller. I gained a lot of experience by being part of LIP and feel I can contribute to this partnership (SSIP). SSIP's sub-committees plan initiatives that are very useful to residents. The information and resources shared are directly related to most residents. For example the workshop on the Canadian

health care system was very helpful because the system is quite complex and hard for newcomers to understand.

KF: How do you see SSIP working in the future?

PG: SSIP has done a lot of good work. Many organizations and residents have joined together. We all know each other and have a good foundation for working together. In the future if we want to solve complicated problems we need to continue working in partnership. For instance, the Syrian refugees who are arriving have many needs – they need to be settled, they need health care, they need to find work. One organization can't solve it all. We need the cooperation of the different agencies to provide different services.

KF: You have been involved in a lot of things in the time you've been in Canada. What's one thing you would say to other residents who are interested in connecting with their community?

PG: You can get a lot out of the initiatives and programs offered in the community. But more than that, you can also put in something. You can contribute too.



Ping in front of ACSA's main site, where she can often be found.

“You can get a lot out of the initiatives and programs offered in the community. But more than that, you can also put in something. You can contribute too.”

Tax season is here!

It's that time of year again – tax season! Did you know that many organizations offer free income tax preparation clinics for people with low-income? It's necessary to file your taxes in order to receive a number of benefits, including the Child Tax Benefit, Working Income Tax Benefit, GST/HST tax credit, Ontario Trillium Benefit, Ontario Senior Homeowners Property Tax Grant, and many more benefits.

Most clinics have the following eligibility criteria:

- Annual income not exceeding:
 - Individual: \$30,000
 - Couple: \$40,000
 - Single with one dependent: \$35,000 (add \$2500 for each additional dependent)

All clinics are by appointment only. Many can accommodate different languages. For more information and to book an appointment, get in touch with a clinic near you.

Agincourt Community Services Association
416-321-6912 ext. 221

Multiple locations
Until April 30

Centre for Immigrant and Community Services
416-292-7510 ext. 0

416-293-4565 ext. 0 (for people 55+)
Multiple locations
Until March 29

Chinese Family Services of Ontario
416-979-8299

3330 Midland Ave., Unit 238 (north of Finch)
Until April 30

Malvern Employment and Social Services
416-397-1175

325 Milner Ave., 9th floor (east of Markham)
Until May 31

TCCSA
416-502-9500

325 Bamburgh Circle, Unit A107

Upcoming SSIP meetings and events



Food Security Committee meeting
March 22, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.

General SSIP meeting
March 24, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.

Resident Engagement Committee meeting
April 13, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

Film screening of *Last Train Home*

In collaboration with National Canadian Film Day
April 20, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.

For more information please contact SSIP (see below).

Connect with SSIP

Steeles L'Amoreaux Strength in Partnership (SSIP) is a network of organizations and residents in the Steeles L'Amoreaux area (bound by Steeles Ave. E., Kennedy Rd., Sheppard Ave. E., and Victoria Park Ave.). The group was formed in 2006.

SSIP works to address community issues, connect residents with resources and strengthen resident voice in shaping their community. We have four areas of focus: health, food security, resident engagement and employment. We welcome community members who are interested in joining the network. You can get involved by participating in our sub-committees and helping to plan events and initiatives. SSIP members discuss community concerns, share information on community programs and services and collaborate on various initiatives tailored to residents' needs and interests.

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