

Connecting with Neighbours during COVID-19



Great neighbourhoods start with you.



How to reach us

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E-NEWS UPDATES

Visit waterloo.ca/subscribe and sign up to receive monthly updates on all things neighbourhoods. Waterloo Neighbourhoods e-newsletter includes information about neighbourhood projects, grants, ideas, and what's happening.

ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

This material is available in alternative accessible format upon request. Please contact us a minimum of 3-5 business days before it is required.

Neighbourhood Activity Ideas

We know the pandemic has made it challenging to connect with neighbours but now, more than ever, these connections are so important! Below are some ideas to help you creatively and safely connect with your neighbourhood. Make sure to follow all current COVID-19 guidelines when planning any project.



In addition to the ideas in this list, connect with your neighbours to find out their creative suggestions for being neighbourly during this time.

Virtual Connections

VIRTUAL GAMES OR TRIVIA NIGHT

- Connect with some friendly competition! Organize a virtual games night for a group of neighbours. Use your favourite videoconferencing platform and some helpful apps or hire a local business with the help of a mini grant.
- Organize a trivia night with neighbours! Consider local hosts such as [Trivial Soup](#), [Beccahosts](#), or [JM Trivia Nights](#).

VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB

- Whether you need to be indoors for an unforeseen amount of time, or prefer to chat about topics from the comfort of your home, a virtual book club is the perfect solution.
- Join a club through [Waterloo Public Library](#) or participate in a [reading challenge](#).
- Create your own virtual book club. There are four main steps to develop your own club:
 - Reach out to your neighbours to see who is interested. Develop a virtual group chat through WhatsApp, Facebook, or another messaging platform. This will help your group plan meetings.
 - Pick a virtual “place” to meet, for example, Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Slack, etc.
 - Pick a book.
 - Pick a date for your virtual meeting.

VIRTUAL READING BUDDIES

- [Frontier College](#) is a charitable organization that runs programs in partnership with the Waterloo Public Library, neighbourhood groups, and other formalized programs. Check out this organization for more information.

- Start your own virtual reading buddy program.
 - Pair mentors with new readers, youth, new Canadians, seniors or others who want to connect to grow their reading skills.
 - Use resources like [Tumble Books](#) or [Storyline Online](#).
 - Be sure to complete vulnerable sector screening for any programs where individuals are paired independently (even virtually).

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

- Enjoy an at-home skill building experience or pursue a passion with a virtual event.
 - Pick a topic/find a provider. View ideas at the bottom of the page for local providers that offer virtual sessions.
 - Book a date.
 - Spread the word.
 - Get supplies delivered, if applicable.
 - If you need help covering the cost of this initiative and the provider, consider applying for a grant offered by the [City of Waterloo neighbourhoods team](#).

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP IDEAS

Cooking

- [Relish Cooking Studio](#)
- [The Culinary Studio](#)

Craft

- [Mindful Makers](#)
- Participate in the [Belong Together project](#)

Fitness, yoga, dance, or other active classes

- [Big Bliss](#)
- [Midtown Yoga KW](#)
- [Dance with Fred Astaire KW](#)
- [Queen Street Yoga](#)
- [The Attic Yoga](#)



Art

- [Button Factory Arts](#)

Gardening

- [Waterloo Horticultural Society](#)

Skill sharing

- Ask neighbours if they would be willing to share their knowledge with others! Perhaps they can provide tips on gardening, knitting, cross-stitch, painting, home improvement, meditation, bird watching, homemade recipes, or other great skills.

For other ideas, check out [Curated Kitchener-Waterloo](#) or other local lists.

NIGHT-IN CELEBRATION

- Nights in are the new nights out. Organize a fun night in for you and your neighbours to participate in your own homes, separately. Consider hosting a movie night where everyone watches the same movie, an at-home social event, or order dinner from local restaurants and arrange delivery to neighbours at the same time! Connect over a video call to share your experiences together.

NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWSLETTER

- Keep neighbours informed of awesome stuff going on in your community, Prepare a neighbourhood newsletter that identifies upcoming events, reports on the success of past initiatives, and recognizes helpful neighbours in the community. Send the newsletter virtually (via email or on social media) or deliver it door-to-door.
- Tools like [Mailchimp](#) or [this top 18 list](#) can help with the process.

Outdoor Activities

DIY BIRDFEEDERS

- Plan a bird feeder creation day. To connect with neighbours, consider splitting on seeds and supplies, planning a virtual decorating event, or sharing photos of newly created feeders. Even a friendly bird feeder competition may help motivate neighbours to participate.
- Here's a few DIY feeder options to inspire you: [frozen fruit ring bird feeder](#), [recycled material bird feeder](#), and [winter bird feeders](#).

NEIGHBOURHOOD-WIDE ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY CHALLENGES

- Organize a neighbourhood e-waste collection.
- Determine your [online carbon calculation](#) and challenge neighbours with ways to reduce and offset it.
- Host a document shredding day and recycle all the paper.
- Reep Green Solutions provides some ideas and programs for environmentally-friendly projects. Check out their [Depave Paradise](#), [Energy Audits](#), [Rain Garden Coach](#), or [Bloom in a Box](#) programs.
- Get smart about garbage and recycling! Organize a neighbourhood workshop with the [Region of Waterloo](#) or challenge the neighbourhood to use the online education tools.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WALKING TOUR

- One of the best ways to explore and experience a city is by walking through neighbourhoods and visiting local spaces that have shaped a city. Do this throughout your own community!
- Self-guided tours allow you to learn about history, vibrant culture, great diversity, and modern amenities- at your own pace and in your own time. Here's a list of already created options:
 - [Waterloo Public Library](#)
 - [City of Waterloo Public Art Collection](#)
 - [University of Waterloo Earth Sciences Museum](#)
 - Watch for [Jane's Walk](#) options each year in early May or organize your own to share with others.
- Consider a nature walking tour or a [trail walk](#) with neighbours to explore different parts of Waterloo.

PLANTING OR STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS

- Apply for a [Partners in Parks](#) project for your local park. This can include tree planting, pollinator patches, plant salvaging, or other stewardship activities.
- Organize your own neighbourhood tree planting or pollinator planting project on private property. Always remember to call before you dig at [Ontario One Call](#). Ideas include:
 - Creating kits for homeowners to plant.
 - Window or balcony planting kits.
 - Organize a tree planting day to encourage backyard or front yard trees.
 - Work with property owners to arrange a planting on building greenspace.

Other Community Connections

PEN PALS WITH LOCAL RETIREMENT HOMES

- Engage older adults in your neighbourhood. Reach out to program staff at local retirement homes and work to coordinate a pen pal program. Recruit interested neighbours to write thoughtful messages or cards and drop these off for program staff to deliver.
- Email can also support virtual pen pals. Have interested neighbours send their kind messages to a central email. Print off these messages and share with older adult residents that would like a connection or retirement homes. If residents have access to technology, coordinate email pen pals with everyone's permission.

CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY RADIO

- Many local radios are looking for contributors, especially those with good news stories! Reach out to local radios like [Midtown Radio](#) or [98.5 CKRW](#) to be included in discussions.

LITTLE LIBRARY/LENDING LIBRARY

- [Little Libraries of KW](#) provides some great resources for starting your own little libraries on private property.
- Register your library on Little Libraries of KW and learn more about [KW Little free Diverse Libraries](#).
- Consider other lending libraries in the neighbourhood for household items, skills, art, or more!

BULK FOOD ORDERING

- Work with neighbours or local restaurants to consider bulk food items to reduce waste, save costs, support fewer shopping trips, and promote neighbourhood sharing. Here are some examples to consider:
 - [Community Food Smart](#) start your own food buying club
 - Battle Creek: [How to create a Neighbourhood Food-Buying Club](#)

NEIGHBOURHOOD BRANDING

- Branding can promote a sense of belonging! A unique landmark, cool history, or recognizable name can help instill a sense of neighbourhood identity. If you have a strong neighbourhood identity and name, consider creating clothing or swag that reflects your neighbourhood pride. If you don't have a name or identity, collaborate with your neighbourhood to develop one!
- Consider working with a local artist or graphic design company to create something unique.

FOOD DRIVE OR DONATION EVENT

- Deciding to support your neighbours by raising food and/or funds is awesome. Get creative and challenge your neighbourhood to a project where everyone wins!
 - [Food Bank of Waterloo Region Toolkit](#)
- Organize a fundraiser to support other important non-profits in the community.
 - The [Kitchener-Waterloo Humane Society](#) provides benefits of hosting an event and shares some in-person ideas.
 - KidsAbility provides [fundraising information](#) and a [Community Fundraising and Events Guidebook](#) to help get you started.
 - Explore other local organizations that might have meaning to your neighbours.