

## **Celebrate International Neighbourhood Day: The First Monday in May**

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The first Monday in May has been designated International Neighbourhood Day by a caring group of UK citizens with an urge to change the world one neighbourhood at a time. Reverend John Papworth, a Scottish clergyman, first proposed the day. He pointed out that not only is the old adage of, “Love thy neighbour” lost on the modern citizen; sadly enough most people have no idea who their neighbours are.

Reverend Papworth’s plan is that people should spend every Monday getting to know their neighbours. It’s easy to be cynical about such a proposal, granted, we all may not end up being best friends but we may end up being good or even better neighbours.

There is an increasing awareness that the dissolution of community and family ties are leading to many problems in our modern day society. There is also evidence that a strong social network is a predictor of long life. The number of caring adults, besides parents, in a child’s life impacts on how well he or she does socially and emotionally. In light of this information it makes sense to build strong neighbourhoods where neighbours care for one another.

In our community we are working to build strong neighbourhoods. In January of 2001, the Building Communities Solutions Project was founded, through an initiative of The District of Maple Ridge Social Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC), the Child Youth and Family Network (CYFN) and the United Way of the Lower Mainland- Communities in Action.

Building Community Solutions identified three areas of concern in our communities. The three priority areas were: Youth, Poverty, and Building a Healthy Community. To address these issues the Community Solutions Steering Committee agreed to use Study Circles as a method of mobilizing the community to develop goals and targets. The Study Circle participants found that the number one action theme that they hoped to achieve was, "People in neighbourhoods getting to know each other and becoming more involved in community life."

The Building Community Solutions Project would like to urge you to become involved in getting to know your neighbours and more involved in community life. We invite everyone to participate in achieving this goal. If you have an idea for your neighbourhood let us know by contacting the Building Community Solutions Coordinator at **604-467-7433** or visit our website at [www.rmkestudycircles.ca](http://www.rmkestudycircles.ca). We would like to support the theme of neighbours getting to know each other by providing resources for neighbourhoods to plan initiatives to meet these goals. Give us a call to learn more.