

## ACING Stories: Announcing Block Connectors

Introducing **Sheila Hallett** as the first official ACING Block Connector for Block 17!



Hello. I am Sheila Hallett and I volunteered to be an Abundant Community Block Connector on the Avenue where I live in North Glenora (NG). The reason I did this was because I moved here about nine years ago to be close to the high school where my two teenagers wanted to attend-I didn't know a soul. After all this time living in the area I realized I still didn't really know anyone in the neighbourhood. I felt that by getting involved in the Abundant Community effort in NG it would allow me to finally meet my neighbours and to contribute to this great place. As my kids are adults now, I have more time to invest in the community that I have grown to love.

I had heard about the ACE initiative before I realized that NG was involved and it appealed to me because it encourages neighbours to get to know people on their block as a means of looking out for one another. Block Connectors can make a point of welcoming new neighbours when they move in down the street and they can plan socials to bring people out of their homes to interact with neighbours in fun ways.

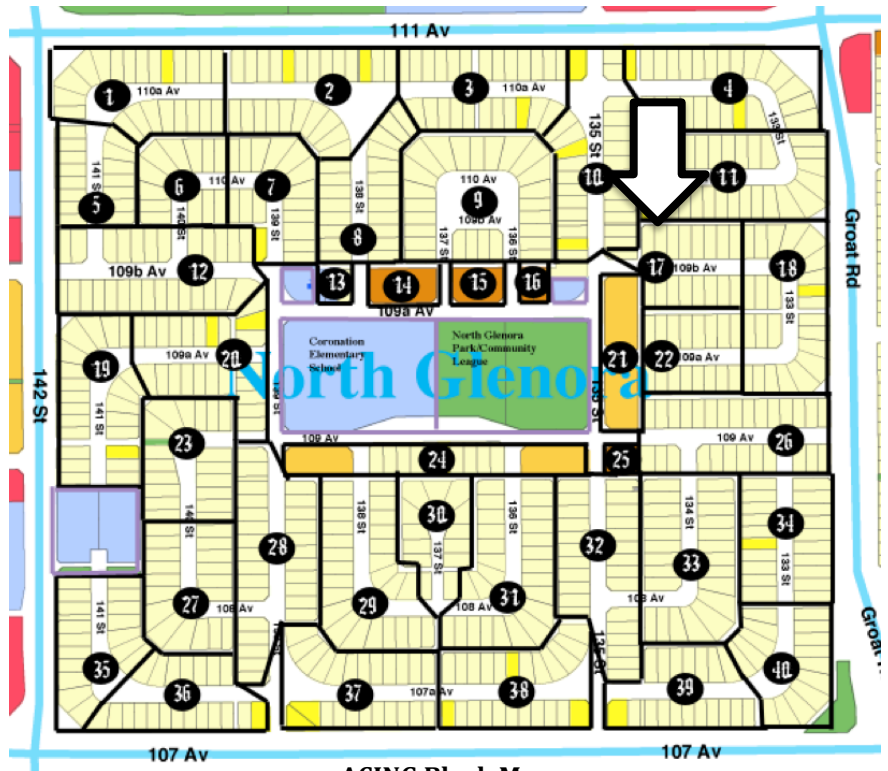
I have initiated a couple get togethers with my neighbours (a block party about a year ago and a few front yard coffee sessions last September). I met people from the block who I wouldn't have otherwise and really enjoyed getting to hear about when they moved to North Glenora and what they like about the area. I learned a lot about what's going on and we shared a few laughs. I was so happy to meet a couple who have lived on the block for about 40 years and they shared some stories of how the area has changed in that time. I hope to meet more of my neighbours and maybe organize a block party in the summer if there's interest. I also want to hear more about what interests my neighbours have.

By collecting information on interests throughout NG the programmers at the community league can start to see patterns and if enough people are interested in the same thing then you have an opportunity to start a program and you can invite people who had that particular interest. You can also keep an inventory of the skills that NG people volunteer to share. For instance, I have one family on my block and the wife trains dogs and the husband is a plumber who would be willing to help seniors who require some plumbing assistance. Those are two great skills to have in our community!

Of course, it doesn't always require organization for great things to happen in NG! On our block for example, in January and early February when we got a lot of snow, I was pleasantly surprised to hear a small tractor clearing the sidewalks on our avenue and I didn't know who to thank. It was so bitterly cold, but the fellow driving the tractor seemed to just shake it off and keep plowing along. After about the third snowfall I finally realized he doesn't even live on our avenue! He lives across the back alley from me and he kept the blocks cleared (even the back alley) for a two-block radius. That's a great neighbour (and if he reads this-THANK YOU!!!) He helped so many people and yet he only moved into the neighbourhood this past summer, so he was helping strangers. It is an act like this that warms my heart and reinforces the concepts of ACE, which include sharing your skills/talents in the community. He shared his time and his tractor to help all of us and earned some good karma.

If you live on Block 17 and want to meet your neighbours (or even *A* neighbour), talk to Sheila. She welcomes contacts from her block. She can be reached at [galbanjo@telus.net](mailto:galbanjo@telus.net) or at 780-982-9401. **In the coming months, Sheila will be visiting all residents within Block 17 to say hi and get to know everyone so make sure to welcome her at your door.**

If you are interested in volunteering for ACING or if you have any questions about the program, please contact the Neighbourhood Connector, Marissa, at 780.237.5266 or [abundantng@gmail.com](mailto:abundantng@gmail.com)



ACING Block Map