



My Hub, My Community

An Ongoing
Collaborative Journey...

Rexdale Community Hub
2017-2018



We are all in this boat together.

Our collaborative journey
towards our mission and vision
continues...



Remarks from the Hub Director

Imagine we are all in this Community Hub boat, together continuing the journey toward our collaborative mission and vision, in search of what makes us a Community Hub, dreaming and reflecting together what collaboration means at our Community Hub, and realizing that our individual organizational identities are woven together when we are all maneuvering our boat to a common destiny.

During our 2017 journey we created a collaborative persona of our Community Hub by stitching together our individual organizational identities. Before we travel back in 2017 to cherish our collaborative persona and work around our mission and vision, I would like to thank our Hub partners, community partners, residents, volunteers, and funders for their leadership and deepest commitment to “My Hub...My Community”. I would also like to thank our Board of Directors, led by Chair Ann McRae for your trust, leadership, and guidance. I want to recognize and thank our staff and volunteers who come to Community Hub each day with a new energy, passion and commitment.

This year marks Rexdale Community Hub’s 5th Annual General Meeting and as I look forward to the future, I strongly feel that we at Rexdale Community Hub are well positioned to continue our journey toward our community vision and mission and creating a brighter future for our families.

Now, let’s travel back in 2017 and cherish some of our collaborative successes together!

Amra Munawar
Hub Director

2017-2018

30+

organizations/grassroots
groups accessed free
community space

2017-2018

Total Hub visits:

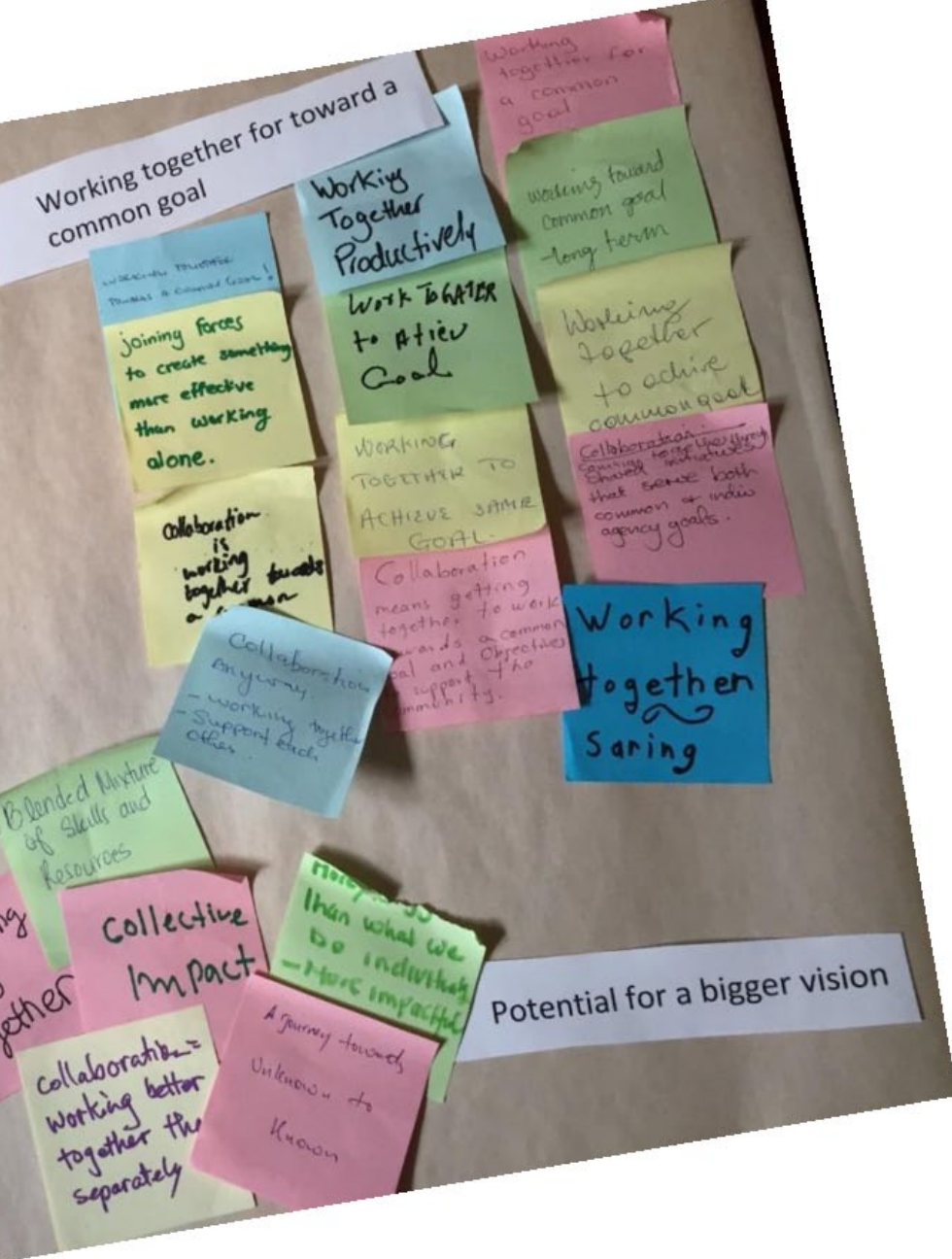
171,662

2017-2018

200+

community members
participated in
enhancing our
welcoming space





Collaboration: Making the Journey

By Russ Mitchell

This year saw the Rexdale Community Hub receive project funding through the generous support of the United Way's *Strengthening the Hub Model* initiative. The purpose of this 2-year funding is to foster a greater culture of collaboration among Hub partners, and to increase our capacity for community engagement in the Hub ... with a view to greater impact and benefit for the community.

In some ways the focus on deepening Hub 'collaboration' can be likened to the TTC's latest advertising slogan: "A bus is just a limo full of friends you haven't met yet!" This statement seems to imply that there is more to the service than meets the eye. And here at the Hub we feel the same! We even adopted our own statement – "If we were 10x more collaborative as a Hub, what would that look like?" – to see where we are heading.

And since the collaboration inherently includes lots of conversation, such as when thinking about improving service/program delivery, we did just that. With a focus on our internal partners, a good amount of time was given to listening and learning from each other. We interviewed one-to-one all of the Hub partner executive directors, held focus groups with cross-agency staff, and visited other shared space sites. It was a time where as 'friends' on the bus, the ear buds got dropped out and together we uncovered a common understanding around terms like 'collaboration' or 'engagement' and the delivery of programs and services; identified collaborative

Working toward a Hub-made definition of collaboration

At RCH collaboration means:

Working together toward a common goal in ways that are clearly communicated and respectful so that we can reach a bigger vision of community impact than any one program can reach alone

culture building strategies and a list of projects – what we have and what we wish for; and got valuable feedback on an organizational structure that will help guide the project.

Riding the bus means there will always be stops along the way. January 2018 was one of those stops. It was here that folk from across all Hub programs came together and stopped to think about what had been learned so far, and to provide feedback based on 7 emerging themes. And like buses, limos, passengers, fares, and the like (which are all part of a transportation system), the group considered what the Rexdale Hub looks like as a system and what we might change. This also provided a platform for our consultant to explain what a Change Lab is – a structured way for partners from across the Hub system to hold conversations focused on specific change – and for participants to start thinking about how we might take some of the emerging themes like: ‘Building Better Internal Communication’, and ‘Maintaining Service Identity Within a Collaboration’, and build them into Change Labs.





Speaking of ‘change’, any change on-route to greater collaboration ought to be measured. So the Hub adapted a collective impact measuring tool that shows where us where we started and where we have progressed to. This year we focused on 3 of the measuring components: Backbone Support (supports the collective process), Common Agenda, and Mutually Reinforcing Activities.

What does this look like in practise? Well, all Hub partners were able to collaborate on a series of events for local residents (eg. Black History Month and International Women’s Day) thanks to the Hub (Backbone) convening and facilitating a partnership planning group represented by Hub partners; a Common Agenda centred around the Hub’s vision and mission resulting in a simple yet practical Hub improvement - a new notice board in the lobby that communicates that day’s events; and finally, Mutually Reinforcing Activities like our hosting of an innovation conference from Denver Colorado that supported knowledge sharing and built the capacity of Hub partners.

In traveling through this year the Rexdale Hub has laid a foundation towards change ... change from being a ‘bus’ to being a ‘limo’, from having ‘passengers’ to having ‘friends’, and from recognizing silos to embracing collaboration; stopping along the way to learn, listen, and welcome on board new ‘friends’ that share the vision and mission of the Rexdale Hub community.

Communication:
imparting or exchanging
information or news

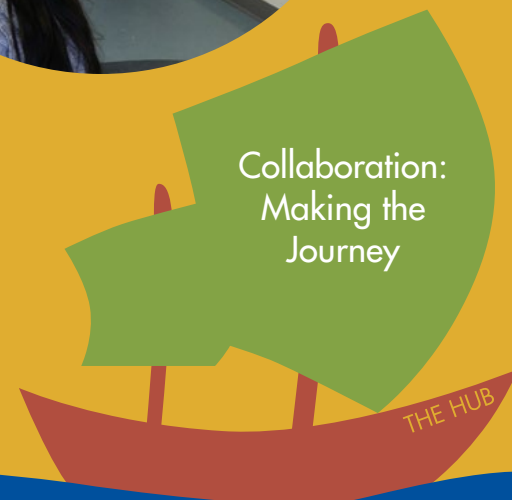
Communicating for collaboration:
sharing and exchanging information in
ways that support collaboration



In traveling through this year the Rexdale Hub has laid a foundation towards... embracing collaboration; stopping along the way to learn, listen, and welcome on board new 'friends' that share the vision and mission of the Rexdale Hub community.



Collaboration:
Making the
Journey





This year...
we have taken the
opportunity to more
fully engage the Hub and
wider community.

Our Collaborative Journey Towards Community Engagement

By Russ Mitchell

Perhaps you've heard the joke, "How do you know if an elephant has been in your fridge?"

Answer: There are footprints in the butter!!

So, where did the expression "elephant in the room" come from anyway? It originates from a Russian poet, who wrote a fable about a man who went to a museum and notices all sorts of small things, yet failed to notice the elephant in the room. Well I'm happy to report that over this past year our community engagement work had NOT gone unnoticed. Though the painful loss of Community Microskills created a temporary sense of the 'elephant in the room', RCH staff on all levels worked on relationship building, nurturing openness and trust and supporting residents to discover and revisit, how they would like to be involved in contributing to their community's overall health and wellbeing.

With a crossing over early in the year from ANC Rexdale (*Action for Neighbourhood Change*) to United Way's new *Neighbourhood Engagement Initiative* (NEI), the RCH was in the forefront of re-building local community engagement.

Most notable was the supporting of community residents to take greater ownership and leadership within the Rexdale Hub community, such as with the North Etobicoke Resident Council. From representing local tenants at the Tower Neighbourhood *Renewal Focus on Action Symposium*, through to giving their time and effort to participate in the first ever North Etobicoke Santa Claus Parade, their work was a success – just like the parade – a good news story for the community!

This year, through the transition from *Action for Neighbourhood Change* to the new *Neighbourhood Engagement Initiative* (NEI), we have taken the opportunity to more fully engage the Hub and wider community, using a model that sees as full partners not only the Hub agencies, but also the North Etobicoke Resident Council, Hub agency clients, space users, community members, and other stakeholders. This has allowed the RCH to develop a more complete and inclusive practice around neighbourhood engagement and to be more impactful with our priorities of capacity building, leadership development, and deepening community connections.

One of the positive impacts made this year through the transition of crossing over to the new *Neighbourhood Engagement Initiative* (NEI) is seen in the growth of community leadership, who in coming together, overcame perceptions to truly value one another.

Here is what happened:

Over the past year as the City launched its Neighbourhood Grant program, one of the first groups to be granted funding, received it to organize a festival in Rexdale. This group of young artists aimed to encourage healing from trauma through artistic expression in a community environment. Part of their focus was redefining the image of their community, specifically the youth of the community, by challenging the media representation of Rexdale, newcomers, and youth.

6,955 residents
reached through
26 separate
engagement
activities/
events





443 residents participated in knowledge sharing activities and skills training events

Two successful grants totalling \$39,700 for resident working group activities and capacity building

69 residents came together for the purpose of civic engagement

The group hosted their event in late October and having a last-minute site change due to unforeseen booking issues, ending up in the 'theatre' of a local Toronto Community Housing Seniors residence. As the residents began filing into the room, one of the seniors living in the building came to ask if she was welcome. The young people leading the event were incredibly welcoming and gracious and thanked her for wanting to join them. They found her a comfortable seat from which she could easily maneuver her mobility device and they also made sure she had a heaping plate of food.

As the group was gearing up to start the performances, another group arrived. This second group of residents were collaboratively working on a Neighbourhood Grant application for the coming round of submissions. These residents were older and much more seasoned in their community engagement and activism. The young people running the festival were very happy to see that their elders had come out. It was at this point, very quietly, that one of the community leaders from the second group asked to speak with the youth who was leading the evening. The group asked him over to learn from him. This moment, and those words, were awesome. This group of young people wanted to show their community and their City that they had ideas to make their neighbourhood happier and healthier – that youth were valuable contributors. This request from the older community leaders was exactly what they had hoped for, but were somewhat surprised by...the elders were coming to them as a resource, asking them for guidance and honouring them in all they had accomplished.

Change is happening in Rexdale! And the good news just keeps coming.

Rexdale Community Hub



2017-2018
Building
Our Residents'
Leadership and
Deepening Our
Community
Engagement



Our
Collaborative
Journey
Towards
Community
Engagement

THE HUB

The Summer of
Innovation Camp
2017 was one of the
best experiences I had
this summer.



Summer of Innovation Camp 2017

By Bukhtavar



Have you ever wanted to just walk through fluffy, grassy fields and just smell the fresh breeze while hearing the soothing sound of birds calmly singing? Well I know you probably have, who wouldn't?

I know a place, that made this very thought come true. The Rexdale Community Hub is a wonderful place that helps you pursue dreams come true. Summer of Innovation Camp 2017 gave many the opportunity to get out of bed and go explore the wilderness. Without this camp, my summer would have been so bland and boring!

Our summer adventure began at the Rouge Valley Urban Park - Parks Canada. The place was full of majestic views. My very first experience with camping and staying away from home for the first time was in grade 6. This and other memorable trips had taught me a lot, like how to start a campfire, but at the Rouge Valley Urban Park, we learned about it thoroughly - such as some safety tips and how to position sticks in different ways to keep a fire going. The guides told us that we had a hike planned right after, and it was the best part. It was like walking through a mysterious magical forest. The flora and fauna were so perfect. I wish how I would love to walk through there every day! The soothing breeze was calming. It was the perfect trail to capture a lot of beautiful pictures. This day was honestly my most favourite yet.



Our second exciting day was spent at the Colonel Samuel Smith Park. The park was full of so many birds other than just pigeons. Yes, we went bird watching! Our guide even brought binoculars for all of us. We walked on a beautiful path looking for all these unique birds of Ontario that I've never seen before. I once saw a woodpecker near my house, but that's about it. Birds are really fascinating – how within just the “Birds” category there are thousands of different species all very different from one another. Our guide told us many things that made birds seem even more mysterious and interesting. During the migrating season birds change their feathers to a dullish shade and get rid of the colourful feathers because they don't need to attract partners due to migration. “It's like birds change to winter clothes in the winter and then summer clothes in the summer.”

Our last adventure was designated at the Ripple Farms. I always thought of ‘farms’ to be places where you either grow crops or take care of animals, but no, it is much more than just that. Just like a farm, the Ripple Farms is a place where you harvest fish poo. This is how it works: The fish are kept in big tanks, whenever they poo, it goes through a tube and that is where the process begins of converting it to ammonium and nitrate for the plants.

As we walked around the whole facility, we found out something utterly weird. This farm was situated upon the grounds of an old facility called the “Don Valley Brick Works” - we were walking on grounds where people years ago were creating bricks. The farm was created to help restore the lost natural habitat, by planting more plants and making a pond with cute little fish and turtles in them. Without knowing any of that, no one could have told that there was once a factory here producing bricks. On our tour, we had to go up this big hill. My legs almost gave up but the view from the top was worth it. Toronto's cityscape could be seen from the West end. Of course we had to get a group picture – the scene was just perfect!



Everything was related to science and technology....I learned many new scientific facts that I never knew about before.



I'm sure everyone had loved each day. I would like to thank the Hub Director and the Camp Coordinator to organize this wonderful experience for all. It takes a lot of hard work to get a plan going and you guys, put all your effort in and made this happen.

The Summer of Innovation Camp 2017 was one of the best experiences I had this summer. Capturing gorgeous pictures and making many new memories was the best. Everything was related to science and technology. It was informative, I learned many new scientific facts that I never knew about before. Trips like these are always remembered. I am truly grateful for this experience and so are many others. I am looking forward for more amazing opportunities like this soon!

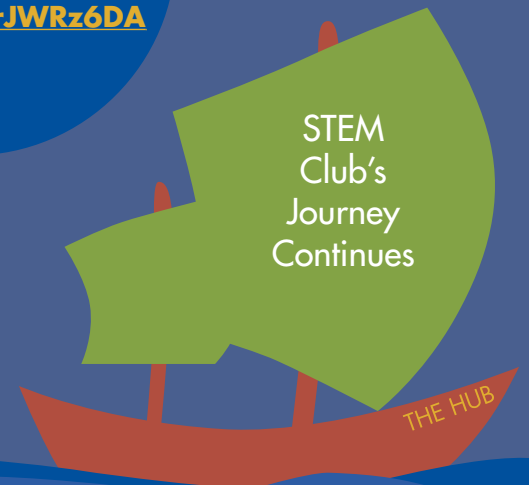


2017-2018
160 Youth
Participated In
STEM Club

Learn more
about the
Rexdale Community
Hub STEM Club
at [https://www.
youtube.com/
watch?v=gP4rJWRz6DA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gP4rJWRz6DA)



STEM
Club's
Journey
Continues





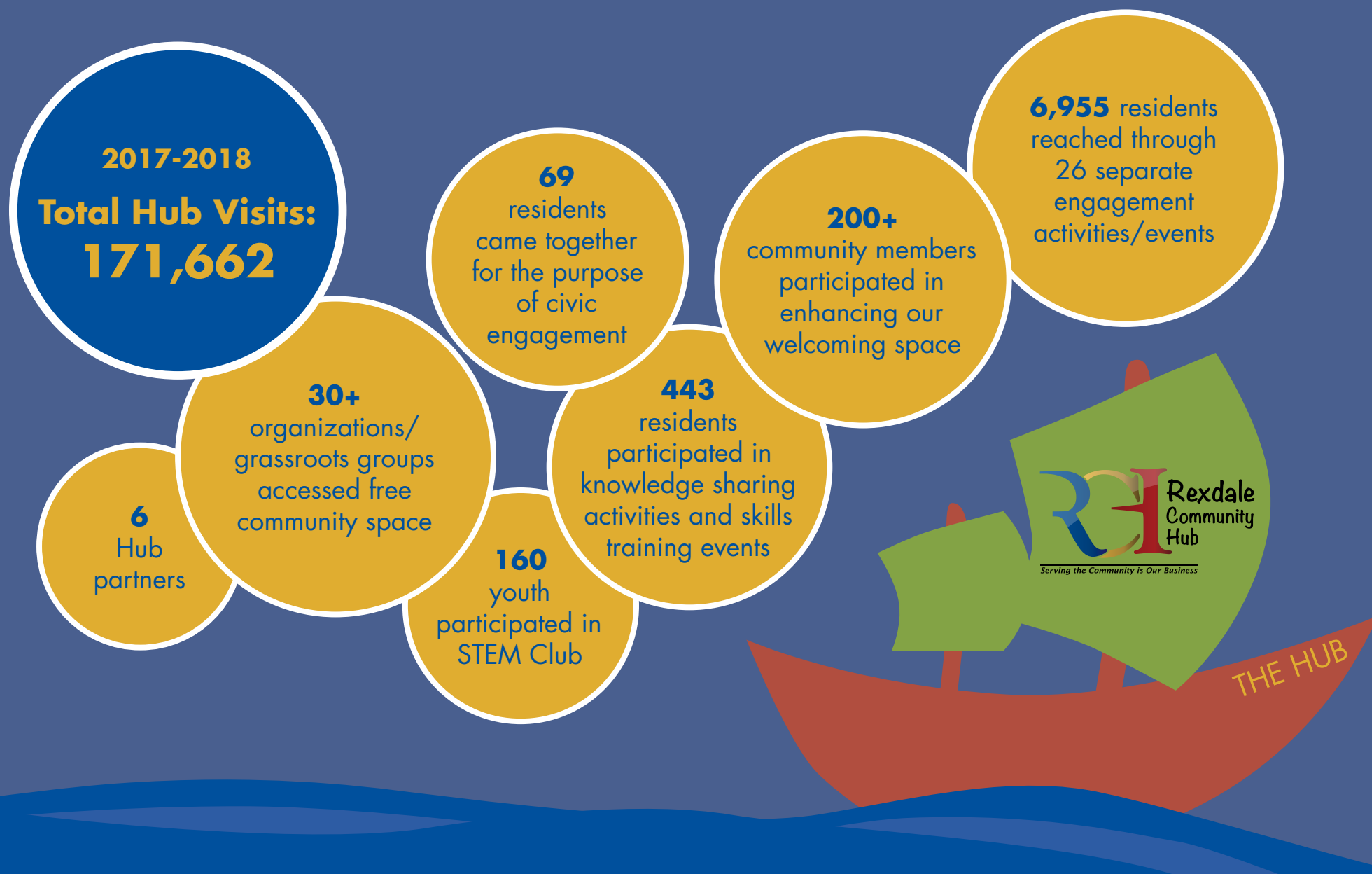
We are
making our
Community Hub
more welcoming
and accessible for
everyone.



Welcoming
and
Accessible
Space

Our 2017-2018 Journey to Collaborative Impact

We are on a journey of growth that is leading us from autonomy to cooperation to coordination and finally to collaboration.



Remarks from the Chair of the Board

Our community hub, at the six-year mark after opening, still feels young and growing. We are fortunate indeed to have launched our existence in a climate of optimism, experimentation and neighbourly collaboration among agencies and various levels of government.

For our first six years, we have been riding a wave of feeling that “everybody loves hubs”. There has been an appetite to learn together, to share what we have learned with our funders and with other hubs across Toronto.

We have gone from being a dormant, redundant empty building to really being on the map in Etobicoke as a community resource. There is so much still to be done! We are constantly working at fine-tuning the cooperative relations among partner agencies, as well as with outside agencies that use the hub, and with the various City departments that support our hub. Fortunately, we have dedicated and talented staff to get this done, ably led by Amra Munawar, our Executive Director, Problem-Solver, Idea Person and Wizard of Finance.

The RCH board and staff are encouraged that the community has come to love the Rexdale hub, loves the fact that it is here, and expects a bit more than we can deliver. We are delighted that United Way also loves hubs, which allows us to work cooperatively together to maximize our impact, our collaboration, our effectiveness in the community. We fervently hope that the new government of Ontario loves hubs as much as the previous government, and sees hubs like ours as one of the keys to unlocking a community’s potential for strength and self-improvement.

Our major partner, the City of Toronto, has demonstrated its love of hubs, especially the Rexdale Community Hub, in so many ways: most recently we have been working with City staff to re-vision the roles and responsibilities regarding the building, its care and operations, as well as its safety and security. City staff keep coming up with new proposals, such as the possible “social supermarket” idea, which could develop into a small grocery store inside the hub, serving our communities neediest households.

We are grateful that our board members love the hub concept, and commit their time to the Rexdale Community Hub, both those who represent partner agencies, and those who live in the surrounding community. They thoughtfully consider, they challenge, they participate in consultations, they scrutinize budget decisions, they uphold ideals.

We are also grateful to the staff and volunteers of all partner agencies for taking that role, “partner agencies” very literally. Without them, community festivals and events would fall flat. Their contributions of time and talent make a difference to the community.

So to all our friends, funders, volunteers, staff and board member, we look forward to your continued support: keep on loving our hub!

Ann McRae
Chairperson

Our Journey Toward Collaboration: A Timeline



2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013-2017	2017
Rexdale Community Hub opened its doors to community with a collaborative vision & mission	We incorporated and created our first collaborative committees	We received charitable status	Our first strategic planning process began	A consultation with partners and space/service users explored opportunities for collaboration/integration	Engaged community in creating a welcoming space	Our journey toward collaboration continues

Our Hub Partners, Board and Staff Members, Funders and Community Supporters

Our Present Hub Partners

Albion Neighbourhood Services
Delta Family Resource Centre
Rexdale Community Health Centre
Rexdale Community Legal Clinic
Rexdale Employment Services
Rexdale Women's Centre

Our Present Board Members

Abraham Abbey	2014-Present
Ann McRae	2014-Present
Desree Prince	2014-Present
Fatima Filippi	2013-Present
Safia Ahmed	2013-Present

Our Funders

City of Toronto
United Way Greater Toronto

Our Supporters

BMO Financial Group
Bird Studies
Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics,
University of Toronto
Department of Chemistry,
University of Toronto
Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto
IBM Canada Ltd.
Home Depot Branch #7114
Innova STEM Labs
Parks Canada
RioCan Real Estate Investment Trust
Ripple Farms
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
Royal Bank
School of Social Work, Ryerson University
Sky's the Limit
Star Spot
TREC Education
Urban Pilot Networks
York University

Our Present Team Members

Amra Munawar
Arpit Trivedi
Clive Alphonso Barnes
Harry Parsaad
Hassan Bokhari
Kizzy Price
Linda Joseph
Prutha Rajee
Russell Mitchell
Samson Ayo Ayeleso
Shriranga Rajee
Thelma Adelekun
Vicki Crystal

Mural Credits

The Art of Wong Inc.





21 Panorama Court
Toronto, ON M9V 4E3

Phone: (416) 741-3000
Fax: (416) 741-3011

Our Mission

Rexdale Community Hub's mission is to provide accessible, welcoming space with collaborative, integrated services and programs to enrich every aspect of the community's life.

Our Vision

A healthy and sustainable community where residents are empowered and engaged.

Our Values

Accessibility – We are committed to ensuring that access to appropriate and acceptable services and resources within the Hub is promoted and ensure that inequities in health and well-being are addressed.

Accountability – We are accountable to the community for the actions and services of the Hub. We will ensure program and services reflect identified community needs, integrate community resources and as partners, we will effectively dedicate our collective resources to this end.

Community Engagement – We are committed to provide stakeholders in the community opportunities to participate in decision-making through processes designed to identify, understand, and address community needs on an ongoing basis.

Diversity – We are committed to inclusion and value and respect the differences found in our community. We demonstrate this understanding through sensitivity, culturally competent and inclusive practices and policies that include individuals from diverse groups in our decision making, information sharing, access to services, governance and employment.

Equity – We are committed to ensuring that all people reach their full potential and are not disadvantaged from attaining it because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, social class, socio-economic status, or other socially determined circumstance.

Excellence – We strive to provide the best and most appropriate programs and services to the community. We listen carefully to the needs of the community, seek the resources to respond to these needs, and implement programs and services with the highest standards.

Sustainability – We will measure, improve, and be accountable for our environmental, financial, social, health and well-being results.

