



AGM May 21, 2025

Operations Manager Report

On the Brink

The Williamsburg Community Association is on the brink of entering an exciting new phase in its history. It has been an adventure and this seems like a good time for us to briefly reflect on how far we have come since our humble beginning in 2008.

In March 2008, Kelly Galloway-Sealock, Ward 5 City Councillor at the time, sent letters to 4500 homes, inviting residents to meet and form a community association. 90 residents showed up to that meeting and a dedicated group from there formed the Williamsburg Community Association (WCA). On November 28 2009, the current Williamsburg Community Centre opened its doors and the WCA started programming from there.

Fast forward 17 years and we are less than a year away from opening the doors to a bigger community centre, going from 3000 square feet to 17 000 square feet!

As we watch the progression of the new space on Rosenberg Road, we continue to grow and a lot has happened in Williamsburg since May 2024!

Events

The Annual Neighbours Day Movie in the Park evening continued on June 15th with beautiful weather and lots of fun activities. There was a handmade market, activities hosted by Dominoes, KW Water Polo, our Fencing Instructor Mike, Live Music arranged through the City of Kitchener Neighbours Day Concert program and a Free Zumba class! This continues to be a well attended and popular neighbourhood event. We also had 3 food trucks onsite.

The Annual Neighbours Day Community Wide Garage sales also happened that morning with 34 homes signed up to participate. This is clearly an appreciated neighbourhood event as residents started asking when the 2025 date was back in April.

We hosted 3 Markets in the Park in June, July and August in Max Becker Common. They were hosted on Wednesday evenings to coincide with the free Zumba class in Max Becker Common. While they were a neat idea for the neighbourhood, there did not seem to be

enough public turnout to make it worth the effort of the vendors. Not everything is meant to be but everything is worth a try and we are glad we gave this particular idea a try.

This summer also marked the opening of the long awaited Williamsburg Common Ground Community Garden. This incredibly hard working committee has done an amazing job bringing this project to reality and we were very happy to be there to witness it and support it..

In October we once again partnered with Freedom in Christ Church for the Annual Trunk or Treat event. It is always a fun way to spend a fall afternoon! The WCA group Trunk Construction crew theme was especially fitting as, this year, we have been watching the progression of the construction of the new Williamsburg Community Centre on Rosenberg Road.

We also participated in the Williamsburg Community Festival in September put on by RBJ Schlegel with a booth, giveaways and free Fencing demo's. This is a great opportunity for us to connect with neighbours we might not have met otherwise.

In February, the WCA continued the Family Day tradition with Freedom in Christ Church by hosting a fun indoor/outdoor winter day of activities. This year the theme was 'Family Day in Paradise' as Moana and Maui were our celebrity guests. There were lots of activities including crafts, popcorn/hot chocolate, board games and lego. Freedom continues to be our most collaborative partner within our community. This is a really fun winter event.

The Earth Day event was once again a very cold day in Max Becker Common. Despite the weather, we had some dedicated community members come and grab supplies to clean up the neighbourhood in their neck of the woods. We added some community partners to the event this year. Dominoes hosted a game of corn hole and gave out free pizza coupons and Education Workers were onsite representing their union, OSSTF, and sponsored the kids seed balls craft. Our local Starbucks donated coffee and some fabulous prizes as well.

Programming

We offered a variety of programming in the summer of 2024, including STEM, Fluid Art, Fencing, Soccer, Basketball, Ultimate Frisbee, Street Hockey (a big hit!) and more. Once again, the WCA offered FREE classes in 3 different parks all summer long. Zumba and Yoga were in FoxGlove Park, Max Becker Common and Hewitt Park and they were well attended.

New programs added in the 2024/2025 year include: Dungeons and Dragons, Bollywood, Random Acts of Crochet Kindness (which is now a FREE program), Cricket and Zumba Gold Toning. We have had a steady team of Instructors all year and are so fortunate for their dedication.

Program Numbers

Program numbers continue to climb each session.

Spring 2024 - **58** programs **690** Participants

Summer 2024 - **45** programs **522** Participants

Fall 2024 - **57** programs **727** Participants

Winter 2025 - **61** programs **801** Participants

We are not sure when the new centre will be ready and so we have booked the schools again for 2025/2026.

We continue to host students from Conestoga College's Work Placement Programs from the Rec and Leisure Program, the Management in Community Services Program and Early Childhood Education Programs. These students help us enrich our programming by providing supporting curriculum and support in class to our Instructors. It is considered an atypical placement which gives these students a unique opportunity and glimpse into an alternate employment route for when they complete their schooling.

Our Rec and Leisure students helped plan a fun and engaging March Break Camp and our Management in Community Services student helped in a variety of ways, most importantly by administering a Community Interest Survey, getting data on what community members wish to see in terms of offerings at the new Williamsburg Community Centre. This report will help guide our planning and expansion as we transition over to the new space.

The partnership between the WCA and The Village of Winston Park continues as we offer our Crochet and Ukulele classes there each week and, of course, our end of session dance and music recitals. It is still the most heart warming evening of every program session for our performers as well as the residents of Winston Park.

We owe a tremendous *thank you* to the following groups for their help:

The City of Kitchener and the Williamsburg Community Centre Staff - Day in and day out, the centre staff help us with customer service, brainstorming, class cancellations, program inquiries, feedback and observations of programming and so much more. They go above and beyond for us and are an essential part of the WCA's success. The City of Kitchener is a vital partner and we appreciate all they do to enable us to offer our programming including the construction of the brand new and incredible Williamsburg Community Centre. We welcome the new Williamsburg Community Centre Facilitator Dannon, who will be guiding the transition over to the new space. ***Thank you City of Kitchener!***

Freedom in Christ Church - They continue to open their wonderful space to us for events, year round indoor and outdoor programming and other collaborations. We are happy to help them promote their new Community Closet initiative, an important service to our

neighbours needing help with clothing. We are so grateful for their partnership and for all they do to enhance our neighbourhood. ***Thank you Freedom in Christ Church!***

Winston Park - Allowing us to use their space has enabled us to grow our programming as well as mutually host a wonderful and ongoing multi generational event. ***Thank you Winston Park!***

Williamsburg Common Ground Community Garden - The WCA have been happy to support the garden as it grew and became an independent organization! It is a wonderful addition to the neighbourhood and we are very excited to now be a part of it with a garden plot to host summer kids gardening classes. ***Thank you WCG Committee!***

I want to say ***Thank you*** to all of our current and past WCA Board members. There is never a dull moment and it is a great team to work with.

It is an absolute pleasure to be a part of so many positive, inclusive and productive programs and events in Williamsburg and I look forward to leaping head first into the next chapter of the WCA's history.

Laura Shaver
Operations Manager