

Good Neighbour Nominations July 2013: Erinlea Crescent & Northleigh Neighbours!!

Submitted by: Comia Family (Erinlea Crescent)

Thank you for encouraging Scarborough residents to acknowledge and show appreciation for good neighbours- it truly does encourage that this indeed is a part of our Scarborough culture. We have been blessed to have lived on Erinlea Crescent in the North Bendale area for 13 years now with our 2 daughters (Cole is 8 and Jessen is 5). We can tell you that our neighbours on Erinlea have taught us how to be good parents and people. They are teaching our children how to be good neighbours. Here are a couple of examples:

Chris & Joanne Douros, the Douros Family (Erinlea Cres)

Chris & Joanne Douros organize our annual 'street party & BBQ'. Their children help set up, host and clean up after the event as well. It is a lot of work, they collect some money, do the shopping and ask for 'special events' that happened in the last year so that it can be announced at the BBQ, handing a flower to whomever graduated, had a special sacrament or a special anniversary that year. These are wonderful neighbours- you see them playing on the street with their kids and grandson and they welcome the other neighbourhood kids to join in. What's amazing is that they have modelled this welcoming way to their own adult children-- who now encourage our school age girls to come out to play hockey with their toddler (Chris & Joanne's grandson). An amazing family who 'chipped in' (literally hacking downed branches blocking our driveway) during the Ice Storm while our own family was away.

Jim, Lila with Chris & Joanne Douros dancing the conga line with our kids at our Erinlea Street Party



Jim & Lila M (Erinea Cres)

Jim and Lila are neighbours who are providing our children with a childhood where 'neighbours' means love, caring and family. Our girls are so excited to see Jim & Lila, and this lovely couple always have a welcoming smile and big hug for our kids. We must confess, that at one point we were looking to move out of North Bendale for a larger home-- when viewing some prospective homes, they asked, *'But where would Jim & Lila live?'*. They protested & would stop looking at homes, they were not going to move away from Jim and Lila :)

Jim & Lila take genuine interest in our girls, their activities, their interests and successes. We always wonder about Jim & Lila, whose loving ways never cease to surprise us.

What kind of neighbours:

- Welcome your curious kids to 'help in the yard', even though the kids' 'assistance' is actually making the weeding/ seeding/ watering take so much longer?
 - hand your kids popsicles over the fence you share?
 - let your kids swim in their pool for hours on end, even buying pool toys just for your kids to play with? (we attribute our daughters being such good swimmers at such a young age based on the total time they have 'lived' in Jim & Lila's pool.)
 - take your kids to the opening night of Despicable Me 2 so that their parents can have a 'kid free' night?
 - have almost weekly summer-fall roast marshmallow roasts for your kids?
 - pick up lawn fertilizer for you because he knew you were running low for the next application?
 - coache the neighbours on when to seed your lawn, how to fertilize best and even does your edging for you? Jim coaches whoever is interested on our street on how to keep your lawn beautiful.
 - take care of your home, picks up your mail, mows your lawn while you are away?
- During the Ice Storm while we were out of town, they checked our home, ran our pipes so they wouldn't freeze and updated us regularly about our giant tree out front.

There are so many things Jim & Lila do with us and our kids that makes them AMAZING neighbours but here are a few "over and above your average good neighbour" examples (see photos)-- they make traditions with our girls.

Each Halloween, Jim & Lila set aside time to do an outdoor decoration 'craft' with our daughters. They do a joint GIANT spider web, for example, connecting our two homes. Each year, Jim & Lila purchase spiders and other decorations for the 4 of them to do together. At Christmas they do the same -- imagining a new 'group craft decoration' that will be displayed *between* our two homes. Two years ago, it was a multi-coloured star. Xmas 2012, Jim & Lila outdid themselves, creating a giant outdoor globe with Santa delivering presents to little girls of the world. These traditions of crafting, outdoor summer activities and movie dates are now cherished traditions our daughters look forward to each year, a tradition these thoughtful neighbours started with them...

Collage: Jim & Lila's 2012 Xmas Outdoor decoration craft with our girls. Jim & Lila doing an outdoor spider web decoration with our girls.



Fred, Rene, Cameron & Benjamin Malcolm (Erinlea Cres)

Every winter, at least for the past 5 years, we would find the Malcolm couple secretly shovelling our wide driveway. First it was just the parents Rene & Fred, but as their boys grew and they witnessed such kindness their parents showed, now they too join their parents in their snow shovelling brigade. We rely on this family every time we go away on vacation-- they watch over our home, email us with any issues, store and bring out our bins and neatly tuck them away again. Their sons, Benjamin and Cameron, are friendly and welcoming for other children to play with them as they play out front. Again, during the Ice Storm while our family was away, we know they hauled away giant branches and chipped ice away from our property while we were out of town.

Joaquin & Ysabella Lagman (Erinlea Cres)

Many years ago, Joachim and Ysa's big sister & brother won a kindness award from the community. The big sister & brother would walk our daughter Cole to school to enable me / Grandma to stay home with then baby Jessen-- rather than pack up the baby in the cold for a brief drop off to St Richard. That big sister and brother moved onto high school and for the past 2 years, Joaquin and cousin Ysa took on that duty of picking up our daughters & walking them to and from school. They are so very responsible about it, texting if they will have an appointment that will delay them. And they have been a life saver for us when we are running late & will not get to the school in time for the odd pick-up-- I need only text them & they collect both my daughters and cheerfully walk them home. These kids also watch over my daughters in the school yard during school time, always loving and friendly to them rather than being cool & distant as often tweens can be :)

Isla & Cliff Booker (Northleigh Drive)

Come Halloween or Christmas, the Booker's front lawn is a magical place. The children from nearby schools & neighbourhood flock before school & after school to wonder at the decorations, to see 'what's new' day to day on their front lawn on Northleigh Drive. Cliff & Isla do this for the children of the neighbourhood-- depending upon the season, their large tree is home to hanging bats, bones, or snowmen or flying reindeer, and in the Summer-- teeny fairies hovering over their teeny garden furniture. The Bookers welcome the children onto their property-- showing them the wonders of this flying bat, those lighted spooky foot prints, this walking broomstick or the elves climbing up their cedars to 'decorate' a holiday tree. They create wonderful vignettes in every corner of their yard. On Halloween night, Cliff & Isla get into the true spirit and will be on their driveway dressed in some unique, home made costume.

One Halloween, Isla had a 'mini-skit' on the front drive as she dressed as a chef-- offering children a 'spooky' treat under one covered dish, or the better option of chocolate bars in the other covered dish. Our daughters (Cole, age 8 & Jessen, age 5) have grown up looking forward each Halloween & Christmas to what the Bookers will set up-- it hurries the kids out of the school yard each afternoon just so they have extra time oohhhhing & ahhhhhing at Cliff & Isla's lawn-of-wonder.

These neighbours have wonderful spirit and spread it at great expense, and great time investment for the joy it brings the kids in the neighbourhood. If you see their yard, one only has to imagine how long it takes for them to decorate and keep adding items to their creation (it seems to change day to day) and the time it takes to place and store them away again (they have a full sized sled come Christmas on their lawn!). Our neighbourhood count ourselves so lucky to have Isla & Cliff's imagination, creativity & kindness right around the corner.

