

**Neighbourhoods Alive! 2007 Forum**  
**October 1, 2007, Winnipeg**  
**United Nations World Habitat Day**  
**“A Safe City is a Just City”**

On October 1, 2007, over 100 Winnipeg residents, representatives of community-based organizations and government representatives gathered at the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre to participate in the fourth Neighbourhoods Alive! (NA!) forum. Previous NA! forums had addressed the topics of Mobilizing Neighbourhoods for Change, Community Economic Development and Partnerships.

The 2007 forum was held in conjunction with the United Nations (UN) World Habitat Day and addressed this year's UN theme, “A Safe City is Just City”. This report presents highlights of the one-day forum.

Moderated by *Gary Loewen*, the forum included featured speakers from the University of Winnipeg and Manitoba Justice, panel presentations by inner-city organizations on their community-based approaches to neighbourhood safety and group discussions to identify ongoing safety priorities.

Manitoba's Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, the *Honourable Steve Ashton* opened the forum by noting that communities all over the world would be exploring the safe city topic that day. He welcomed the exploration of issues on urban safety from a social justice and community development perspective by the Winnipeg forum participants.

The featured speaker for the morning session, *Dr. Jino Distasio*, Director of the Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg, presented on Winnipeg neighbourhood safety within a global context. He discussed how global urban distress (poverty/safety concerns) is often a result of communities that have significantly weaker social, economic and environmental attributes and insufficient internal resources and capacity to respond to such conditions. Dr. Distasio defined a safe and just city as one which combines the aims of equity, diversity, growth and sustainability (*for additional information see NA! Web site*).

The morning's panel was comprised of representatives of a diverse group of community-based organizations currently engaged in crime prevention through social development projects for:

- immigrant and refugee communities (*Wanda Yamamoto*, Knox Centre - Mosaic Market Project);
- caregivers of gang involved/at risk youth (*Hero Mudd*, West Central Women's Resource Centre - Respect Project);
- neighbourhood residents (*Sel Burrows*, Chair, Point Douglas Residents Committee); and

- the broader inner-city community (*Tom Simms*, Community Education Development Association).

The second featured speaker - *Beth Ulrich*, Manager of Crime Prevention, Manitoba Justice opened the afternoon session with her presentation, "Ingredients for Successful Safety-related Community Initiatives", which focused on global and national research trends and growing demands for organizations to implement evidence-based initiatives to support crime prevention. She noted that current research suggests programs focusing on children and parents have proven effective in short-term interventions. Identified ingredients for successful crime prevention projects should also include proper diagnosis of the problem, defined scope of action, tackling multiple risk factors, building partnerships to support actions, and proactive outreach/mentoring (for additional information see NA! Web site).

The second panel presentation focused on the needs of inner city at-risk youth (*Bernice Getty*, Ndinawe - Youth Resource Centre) and strengthened connections between youth and the police (*Lorne Belmore*, North End Community Renewal Corporation - School Resource Officers Project).

The forum concluded with small group discussions on the ongoing priorities to ensure Winnipeg is a safe and just city. Identified priorities included:

- Promoting basic human rights (supporting the UN Charter of Human Rights for Aboriginal/Indigenous People, equitable policy development);
- Addressing the needs of at-risk groups (women, aboriginals, children and youth);
- Comprehensive and holistic responses to safety issues (program development including relationship-building between government and the broader community);
- Community empowerment (promoting education, cultural diversity and anti-racism);
- Long-term funding mechanisms (support for collaboration, youth programming, parent/community involvement); and
- Community policing.

*Minister Ashton* ended the session by committing to share information from the forum with his cabinet colleagues. He indicated that safety and crime-prevention will continue to be a priority for Neighbourhoods Alive!, and noted that, to date, NA! has funded over \$2 million in safety-related projects under the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and established 50 Lighthouse sites.

*For additional highlights please see NA! web site  
([www.neighbourhoodsalive.mb.ca](http://www.neighbourhoodsalive.mb.ca)).*

*W:\rdvsid\Neighbourhoods Alive!\FORUMNA! Forum 2007\2007 Forum summary.doc*