

Community Ambassador Initiative Overview

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Synopsis

It's always a good time for neighbours to look after neighbours, but in the current Covid-19 pandemic we, the value of neighborliness is even more critical to the health and vitality of Cochrane. The Community Ambassador Initiative safely and strategically mobilizes local people to reach-out, care-for and assist a small group of their friends and neighbours. It also connects them to a larger network of resources (experts, volunteers and leaders) in the community who can meet needs which exceed the capacity of a single Ambassador.

Background

Cochrane Alliance Church developed the Community Ambassador Initiative in late March as a means of mobilizing its volunteers to monitor the emerging needs of the households connected to the church. To date, more than 350 homes (representing more than 1000 people in Cochrane and area) have been contacted and served by a volunteer team of 75. Ambassadors reach out to families by telephone and collect information using online forms. When the need is straightforward, the ambassador is empowered to respond directly. The information they collect allows leadership to act when extra support is needed, or when a more accurate understanding of the big picture is needed. Put simply, the Initiative integrates old-fashioned neighborliness with a simple but effective communication platform.

Important Notes

- Data is collected respecting FOIP. Participants give permission for their information to be shared with those who need to know within the initiative.
- Since Ambassadors primarily operate on the telephone, isolated volunteers can get involved.
- Since the information sharing process is online, the system is readily built to expand. Should a business, neighborhood, or community group wish to serve its neighbors, all they need to supply is a coordinator to mobilize local ambassadors to serve their constituency. Information is then passed from Ambassadors to the coordinator, allowing a new group to operate as its own "cell."
- To date, 2 churches are using the system – Tapestry Church and Cochrane Alliance Church.
- There is no cost associated with this initiative as the groundwork has already been laid.
- Although there are some religious components to the current system (i.e. an opportunity to request prayer support) they can be easily modified by groups who do not wish to use them at this time.

What's Next?

Cochrane Alliance leadership is open to conversation with the Town of Cochrane or other groups/businesses who may find this Initiative useful. We are currently in discussions with All Saints Church, Helping Hands and the Hospice Society of Cochrane. For more information, check-out the Ambassador Initiative on our homepage at www.cochranealliance.com or contact Lead Pastor, Jason Koleba 403-92-6100 ext. 105.