

Canadian Innovation Helps Global Citizens Discover Neighbourhoods in 4th Annual Urban Walk-fest

360+ Jane's Walks across North America, Europe and Asia connect residents with city and each other

Toronto, ON – April 12, 2010 – On the May 1 and 2 weekend, thousands of Canadians will take to the streets as part of the fourth annual [Jane's Walk](#), a series of free neighbourhood walking tours that explore our collective history, architecture, planning and personalities. Last year's walk saw more than 10,000 walkers explore 315 tours across Canada, the United States and India; this year's adds walks in Ireland, Uruguay and Spain.

Celebrating the legacy of Jane Jacobs, the foremost urban thinker of recent times, Jane's Walks inspire citizens to get to know their city and each other by getting out and walking. Jacobs famously declared that walkable, diverse and mixed used neighborhoods are the hallmark of a healthy city and its people.

Jane's Walk is a thriving Canadian innovation that's going global. Last year 46 cities took part across North America. This year Jane's Walks will span 60 cities worldwide (28 in Canada, 27 in the U.S., 5 international) with some 360 walking tours on offer. New Jane's Walk partnerships this year include Los Angeles, Brooklyn, Chattanooga, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Victoria, and Jane's Walk is also expanding internationally with walks scheduled in Mumbai, Goa, Dublin, Madrid and La Paloma Uruguay.

"For Jane Jacobs, the best way to get to know the city and the neighbours was on foot," says Jane Farrow, executive director of Jane's Walk. "Jacobs encouraged everyone to just get out and look around, to walk the sidewalks and talk about what they thought needed to happen to make their neighbourhood better."

"When it comes to improving their own neighbourhoods, people are often isolated or unaware of others who may share their interests," Farrow adds. "Jane's Walk helps bridge these gaps and encourages people to gain new perspectives on the sidewalks they use for the basic tasks of daily life – tasks like shopping, getting to school and work."

Volunteer tour guides, ranging from aspiring municipal candidates to urban planners to recent immigrants and high school students, customize their tours with personal stories, local perspectives and insider hideaways to help bridge social and geographic gaps and create a space for cities to discover themselves.

This year's walks have the town covered with everything from the formal to the far-out:

- Walk along the first phase of Winnipeg's Rapid Transit development to see how it fits into a vision of walkable, mixed-usage neighbourhoods;
- See how the one-half decade rebuilding of Regina's Riverside Dyke has resulted in a different relationship with the community;
- Discuss the future of Village des Tanneries, a resilient Montreal community once again under threat by a plan to rebuild the aging Turcot Interchange;
- Rediscover Calgary's misremembered past in the patterns and echoes of Inglewood;

- And new this year – a self-guided MP3 audio tour all about Jane Jacobs and her Annex neighbourhood is available on our website.

Jane's Walk is made possible with the support of: Ontario Trillium Foundation, Toronto Community Foundation, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, Department of Canadian Heritage, AVANA Capital, Metcalf Foundation, City of Toronto Cultural Services & Public Realm Section, media partners CBC Toronto and NOW Magazine and promotional partner Media Profile.

About Jane Jacobs

Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) was an urbanist and activist whose writings championed a fresh, community-based approach to city building. She had no formal training as a planner, and yet her 1961 best-seller, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, introduced ground-breaking ideas about how cities function, evolve and fail that are now common sense to today's architects, planners, politicians and activists. Foremost is her simple yet revolutionary idea that dense, mixed use neighborhoods are the key to the health and survival of a city.

About Jane's Walk

Jane's Walk cultivates a broad understanding of how cities – their economies, neighbourhoods, communities, and institutions – organically develop and thrive. It works to advance walkable neighbourhoods, to increase urban literacy and promote neighbourhood cohesion, civic engagement and leadership.

PHOTOS of last year's Jane's Walk are available upon request or at http://janeswalk.net/about/press/press_photos/

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