

Toronto's Urban Festival Jane's Walk Celebrates Fifth Anniversary

Jane Jacobs' best-seller *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* turns 50

Toronto, ON – April 28, 2011 – On the May 7 and 8 weekend, thousands of Torontonians will take to the streets to mark the fifth annual [Jane's Walk](#), a series of 170 free, urban neighbourhood tours that inspire citizens to get to know their city and each other by getting out and walking. The Toronto innovation will stroll through 35 cities across Canada and [68 cities](#) worldwide in celebration of Jane Jacobs's birthday (May 4).

In total, more than 12,000 walkers will take part in 449 tours – a 30 per cent increase over last year - led by passionate and friendly locals who want to share their inside tips on great places to walk, hang out, shop, eat and explore in their own neighbourhoods. New international Jane's Walk partnerships this year include Sao Paulo (Brazil), Wuhan (China), Tel Aviv, (Israel), Colchester and Hereford (England), Berlin (Germany), Guadalajara (Mexico), Amsterdam (Netherlands), Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Carcar (Philippines).

"Jane Jacobs is the foremost urban thinker of our time," says Jane Farrow, executive director of Jane's Walk. "She encouraged people to familiarize themselves with the places where they live, work and play – believing in the importance of local residents having input on how their neighbourhoods develop."

2011 is also the 50th anniversary of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, the best-selling book that introduced Jane Jacobs' ground-breaking ideas about how cities function, evolve and fail. Her community-centred vision started with the idea that local residents know best how to shape and improve their neighbourhoods. Foremost is her simple yet revolutionary idea that dense, mixed use neighborhoods are the key to the health and survival of a city. Decades later, it has become a model for generations of architects, planners, politicians and activists.

To celebrate the occasion of the 50th anniversary of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane's Walk Toronto is holding a reading relay of the text in front of Toronto's City Hall over the Jane's Walk weekend. Anybody can drop by the Jane's Walk tent on Nathan Phillips Square and read aloud, sign the log book and add their voice to the celebration of this enduring work.

A new [Jane's Walk iPhone® app](#) allows users across Canada to sort the walks by date, neighbourhood and location for free. This year's tours walk the gamut with everything from the historical to the controversial:

- No need to travel to Brampton, explore Rexdale's Albion Road in search of the city's best Indian food;
- Take in some of the city's graffiti stock and join the conversation about whether it is art or vandalism;
- Walk with Miss Canadiana as she fills you in on the the missing history of Black Canadians in the Grange area of Toronto;
- Bike through time investigating what could have been if the Spadina expressway was not stopped by the power of the people;
- See the results of a hotly-debated planning decision in the Evolution of the West Queen West Triangle;
- Discover the beauty and vulnerability of the Scarborough Bluffs with Blessed Cardinal High School staff and students;
- Join the debate about official and unofficial stories of natural and built forms at York University Campus;
- Get an insider's perspective on how the city how pedestrian-friendly initiatives happen in the City;
- Firefighter Jonathon Robinson offers a ground level perspective on Toronto's emergency response services, including the big fire at Gould Street;
- Join author Amy Lavender Harris for a literary walking tour of 'Parkdale, Scummy Parkdale';
- Explore the messy and complicated world of planning and street design in the Stockyards area of Toronto;
- See creative design that makes room for trees and learn what it takes to protect old trees and ensure newly planted ones survive;
- And new this year, a night Jane's Walk –Darkness and Light explores the lighting grid of downtown Toronto.

Also, throughout May, the Walkability Studies of Toronto's inner-suburban high rise neighbourhoods, a research initiative of Paul Hess (University of Toronto Geography) and Jane's Walk, will be featured in a photo exhibit at the Urbanspace Gallery at 401 Richmond Street West.

Jane's Walk is made possible with the support of TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, AVANA Capital, Metcalf Foundation, Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Toronto Community Foundation, Department of Canadian Heritage, Context, Library District Condominiums, Daniels Homes, GE Canada, Streetcar Developments with Dundee Realty Corporation, Toronto Community Housing, Toronto Real Estate Board, Cement Association of Canada, Concord Adex Inc., Dialog, Kirkor Architects & Planners, Urbanspace Property Group, Digital Lunch, McMillan, Tides Canada, University of Toronto Cities Centre, University of Toronto Geography and Program in Planning, Urban Capital, and media partners CBC/Radio-Canada and Toronto Star.

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.

Twitter: [@janeswalk](https://twitter.com/janeswalk)

Hash tag: #jwalk

Facebook: [Jane's Walk](https://www.facebook.com/janeswalk)

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

Contact:

Jane Farrow, Executive Director

director@janeswalk.net

416-642-5779

www.janeswalk.net

Nikki Gentles

Publicist

nikkigentles@hotmail.com

416-737-6801