



Annual Report to the TCL Membership from the TCL Board of Directors

October 2019

The following is the Board of Directors' Annual Report to the TCL Membership outlining the work and activities of the Thorncliff Community League (TCL) over the past year.

Year in Review

Reflection by Jonathan Krenz, Director

Thorncliff Community League is growing and maturing. I have been directly involved with the League for four years and during these years I have participated in many successes and one or two “failures” in regard to TCL programs, events, and initiatives. During these years the League has become more and more effective. The community is recognizing and appreciating the work of the League and the League is learning how to best serve the community.

The re-emergence of a relevant community league has been a large contributor to a general awakening within the community as a whole. Most notably the Thorncliff Park area is now a more clean, friendly and busy place. Community areas have come alive with the Community Garden and colourful storage container. Basketball courts and soccer fields are busy most nights of the week. And a more positive atmosphere is felt throughout the central greenspace and walking paths. A dedicated team, championed by Randy and Darlene Niederhaus, have kept the park area free of litter and debris.

In addition, the profile of the Thorncliffe Shopping Centre has seen great improvements. Many new businesses have moved in and the property has been updated. Graffiti and acts of vandalism have decreased thanks to the efforts of Sharon Quickfall.



Randy and Darlene Niederhaus have been central to the success of the community league. And a dedicated team of volunteers has given the League enough strength and stability to gain validity within the community. There is much yet to be done, but a successful platform has been created for forward movement.

Personally, I felt the End of Summer BBQ held in the first week of September was the highlight of the year. Also, the drop-in soccer program has an almost self-sustaining volunteer team. The work done in removing the rink boards and fencing has opened up the park area and made the whole area more safe!

The executive and volunteers of TCL can look at the accomplishments of the past years with a sense of pride and satisfaction. Although we may not have done all that we wanted to, we should not let that steal from the recognition of all that we have accomplished.

Membership

Darlene Niederhaus, Membership Director

When you look at the number of actual TCL members you might think it's not very many and you'd be right. The past year we had 33 household memberships versus 42 in the previous year. Revenue from memberships was \$730 while our operating costs were \$13,771.11.

One of the hardest tasks in recruiting new members is making a case for the value of a league membership. The cost is very minimal, \$25 for a family membership and there are many benefits like free events and children's programs, free access to community swimming pools and skating rinks, and membership discounts at City recreation centres, but most people feel the perks are just not enough. The City of Edmonton requires a league membership to register children and youth in organized sports programs, and sadly, that's the only reason many people across the city purchase a community league membership.

TCL volunteers have come to learn it's not the tangible perks that offer the greatest value, it's the community connections you make. Value comes from belonging to something bigger than yourself, your household or immediate neighbourhood. It comes from taking stock of your larger community and investing into it, which in turn, makes it a much more enjoyable and safer place for you, your family and your neighbours.

TCL's mandate is to work for the benefit of its members, but it also serves all Thorncliff residents. TCL members have actively supported the neighbourhood in dealing with several critical civic and safety matters and that benefits everyone. The extensive work accomplished over the past four years has been spearheaded by a handful of dedicated volunteers to whom we extend our sincere gratitude.

There's great value in becoming a league member and getting personally involved. A helping hand is always welcome. The first step to show your support for your community is to purchase a community league membership.

Volunteers

Jonathan Krenz, Volunteer Coordinator

It is always tempting to focus more on what we don't have than to appreciate what we do have. What we have in TCL is well over a dozen volunteers who are active, dependable and excellent ambassadors for the community. A Middle Eastern proverb says,

***"Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their labor."***

If we had only one volunteer, we would be so very thankful for a second. Likewise, if we had two, we would be so very thankful for a 3rd and 4th. So rather than look only at all the space that may yet be filled by volunteers let's focus on the number of volunteers who have been active this year. Their cooperation in working together has produced a "good return" for TCL and the community as a whole.

Here are the names of those who have had recurring volunteer service with TCL:





Nathan Berg
 Doug de la Salle
 Glenn Kennedy
 Randy and Darlene Niederhaus
 Rebecca Ryzuk
 Margaret and Eben Tanwani

Rick Chambers
 Aldo and Val Fazio
 Jonathan and Marcia Krenz
 Sharon and Brian Quickfall
 Richard Stubbings
 Pam and John Winski

We'd also like to recognize our youth volunteers who help us out from time to time with programs and events:

Brandon Fratar
 Juan Luna
 Roy, Lisa, and Diane Tanwani

Elias Krenz
 Badou Saidy



For our City of Edmonton annual operating grant application, we logged over 1200 volunteer hours and that only includes volunteer hours pertaining to what the City requires us to report on. It took many more hours than this to run the league's programs, events, projects, and other activities offered this year.

To everyone noted above, our greatest gratitude for a job well done!

Communications

Jonathan Krenz, Communications Director

The communication (contact) list has not grown much in the past year. I set an ambitious goal of doubling the distribution list during this year. However, it has proven difficult to collect people's contact information.

I recognize a catch-22 in our efforts in that we use community events as a way to connect with community residents and to collect new contact information. But our primary means of advertising these events is through email and social media. Therefore, we are trying to collect the contact information through events that we are promoting by means of the very information we don't have. Hmmm. Not working so well.

Where we do communicate well with the community at large is through our [TCL website](#). Our photo gallery tells the Thornclyff story very well. Regular visits to our [Programs](#), [Events](#), [Community Matters](#), and [Membership](#) pages is one of the best ways to stay informed about what's happening in our community. A special thanks to Darlene Niederhaus who keeps our website current and posts photos to the gallery.

One area of progress this year has been an increase in our social media presence. Activity on our Facebook page has increased, and we have had more interactions than in all previous years. Many thanks to Sharon Quickfall who has moved TCL onto Instagram as well!

In 2019, we have sent four Community Newsletters via email. A fall newsletter will be sent in advance of the Annual General Meeting in October, and a yearend/Holiday Season newsletter is scheduled as well. [Subscribe to our newsletter](#)

Programs

Randy Niederhaus, Programs Director

Soccer

For a fourth year, the weekly drop-in soccer program ran from mid-June through mid-September on Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. We had another very successful year with up to 40 children, youth and adults turning out for almost every game. Many thanks to our program partner Victory Church on the Rock and the folks from Victory who join us on soccer nights. From time to time, the younger children were treated to glitter tattoos, and everyone enjoyed watermelon or freezies at break time. On July 25, we held a well-received mid-season BBQ for the soccer players, their families, and the volunteers.



Many thanks to all the dedicated volunteers who contributed to the program's continued success, especially Jonathan and Marcia Krenz, Juan Luna, Nathan Berg, Darlene Niederhaus, Sharon Quickfall, and Rebecca Ryzuk. A very special thanks goes out to Randy Niederhaus for his tireless efforts in managing the equipment, washing the pinnies, preparing the half-time refreshments, and setting up the field every week.



Thorncilff Community Garden

Plots in our community garden were rented by ten families this year. Thorncliffe School planted two beds as an opportunity for students to learn all about gardening and harvesting. There was extraordinary plant growth this year with all the rain, but the harvest suffered due to lack of sun and warm temperatures. The central flower bed bloomed all summer and once again remained a focus of beauty with its wide range of colours and flowers.

We extend our sincere appreciation to Thorncliffe School for providing the water source for the garden.

We did encounter some vandalism this year which required some clean-up and in the process some plants were damaged, and our umbrella being ripped beyond repair. Unfortunately, this is the reason the garden was built inside a fenced area and the gate remains locked at all times.

Thorncilff Skating Rink Program

Once again, area residents enjoyed the best of the winter season at the Thorncliffe Community League outdoor skating rink located in Thorncliffe Park. Building and maintaining the rink this year was a major undertaking as flooding began in mid-November and ended in mid-March—the longest skating period in the last 5 years. Lots of hard work and consistent cold temperatures created a superb ice surface. Night skating was offered on weekends only because the light timer stopped working and we required a volunteer to turn on and off the lights nightly.

In addition to a number of hockey players and skaters that took advantage of our outdoor rink both day and night, Thorncliffe School also used the outdoor rink for its daytime skating program for students.

Many thanks to Randy Niederhaus and Glenn Kennedy for their volunteer services. A special thanks to Thorncliffe School who provided the water used for the making the ice and the electricity for running the lights at night.

Special Projects

Thornciliff Rink Redevelopment

In early 2019, the TCL Board designated \$10,000 towards a rink redevelopment project. Beginning in early 2018, TCL sought input from the community for ideas to redevelop the skating rink area as the rink boards had deteriorated to the point where they had become dangerous and needed to be removed. We received minimal responses to several community communications. A few people requested the skating rink be replaced.

Our research indicates replacement of the rink would cost about \$100,000. Acquiring funding for project alone would be a huge undertaking. The approval process with the City of Edmonton is lengthy and time consuming and we do not have the project management expertise to manage the project. Significant funding would be required to maintain it year after year, therefore placing a huge financial burden on future TCL Boards. This undertaking far exceeds the current scope of work for TCL Board of Directors.

However, the current TCL Board did what was necessary to keep our community safe, and so the skating rink was demolished over the past summer. The work was completed in three phases:

Phase 1 Developing the proposal and obtaining approval by the City of Edmonton (January to April)

Phase 2 Removing the galvanized wire mesh and puck board (May)

Phase 3 Removing the remaining boards and posts and repairing any damage to the grasslands (July)

Special thanks are extended to all the volunteers who participated in the project:

TCL Rink Redevelopment Planning Committee

Doug de la Salle, Chair

Aldo Fazio

Randy Niederhaus

Richard Stubbings

Pam Winski

Una Bryce, Liaison for the City of Edmonton

Demolition Crew for Phases 2 and 3

Doug de la Salle

Alex (from Boardwalk)

Rick Chambers

Aldo Fazio

Glenn Kennedy

Randy Niederhaus



A special thanks to Val Fazio, Darlene Niederhaus, and Sharon Quickfall who assisted with taking debris to the Eco Centre, photographing the demolition, and feeding the volunteers on demolition days.

The budgeted cost for the demolition was \$3,945 and the cost to complete was \$3,905.88. Repairs to the timer for the outdoor lights is included in this cost.

Thornciliff will continue to have outdoor skating as long as we have active TCL volunteers to build and maintain the rink. The rink will be lined by snowbanks and public skating will continue. However, beginning this season hockey nets, pucks and sticks will not be allowed as the danger for accidental injury is too high.

We regret that hockey players will need to find ice time at other outdoor or indoor skating rinks, but a snowbank rink does not accommodate any form of hockey activities on the Thorncliff Park skating rink.

With the remaining \$6,000 in our special project account, TCL will endeavor to add benches in the area for putting on skates at the earliest possible opportunity.

TCL Events



Santa made an exclusive appearance once again in Thorncliff last December for our **2nd Annual Santa Light Tour**. Young and old in attendance enjoyed a skate with Santa and warm cup of hot chocolate over an open fire pit. It was a chilly night, so attendance was low.

Two other community-wide events were on the calendar as well. In February, the **3rd Annual Winterfest** happened on Family Day weekend, another chilly day. A group of hardy volunteers and brave community residents made the best of the day. This year

we held a community broomball game. There were fire pits and marshmallows, and music, and the big attraction was horse drawn sleigh rides around the park.

In May, we also hosted a pilot **Community Yard Sale** which proved to be a great deal of work to organize, collect donations, and set up for the event. We invited the entire Thorncliff Community through an invitation sent through Canada Post mail. Residents were given the opportunity to come to buy treasures, donate items for the TCL tables, or to rent their own table and sell their own goods. Ten vendors joined us for the event held in the Thorncliffe School so not matter what the weather, the event would happen! Lots of bargains were had by day's end. Several other community yard sales were held that day in our area which offered avid yard sale goers a great day of treasure hunting. A moderate crowd of folks passed through our sale. TCL also provided a hotdog combo for \$2.50 for lunch which was well received by our visitors.



The goal of TCL events is to draw the community together in an environment that can create social connections and awareness. TCL events require a notable number of volunteer hours and as such, they have a high investment cost for our handful of volunteers. Nevertheless, these events have the highest potential to draw a large group of community residents together at one time. It is hard to create this kind of connectedness in another way. We continue to grow in our own capacity to plan and host "successful" community events. Anyone with ideas and a willingness to help TCL develop this goal would be a great asset to our team.

Safety Committee

Sharon Quickfall, Committee Chair

The Aldergrove, Callingwood North, Lymburn, and Thorncliff Community Walking Map was completed, printed and distributed.

TCL helped start a Westend (Aldergrove, Belmead, LaPerle, and Thorncliff) Community League Graffiti Committee. Thorncliff hosted the initial organizing meeting in June at our local shopping centre coffee house, the Cake & Dessert Cafe. A follow-up meeting to discuss the summer's activities, statistics and plan for 2020 will be held in October.

Ongoing safety monitoring activities include walking the community to report any problem areas such as graffiti, vandalism, etc. as well as monitoring neighbourhood crime stats and doing follow-up as necessary, as well as promoting crime reducing tips via TCL's newsletter and website.

Civics Committee

Sharon Quickfall, Committee Chair

LRT - Thorncliff has an official Community League Representative as well as one of the two Citizens-at-Large seats on the Citizens Working Group. Sharon Quickfall and Pam Winski continued to raise residents' concerns on subjects such as parking, traffic and protecting the trees along 87 Avenue through ongoing important and significant input from Thorncliff residents. Matters brought forward included resident's concerns about shortcutting through the community, residential access during construction, and pedestrian crossings on 87 Avenue post construction.



TCL reps also monitored the expropriation and attendant problems (transient squatting, etc.) of 8623 175 Street which has become a derelict property and will continue to work with the City to try resolve these issues until the house is torn down.

Rezoning of the property at 175 Street and 87 Avenue - Alldritt withdrew its rezoning application but still plans future rezoning of the site but within the City's Transit Oriented Development guidelines.

City of Edmonton Planning Department – Sharon Quickfall responded to approximately 15 requests for review and comment on zoning and bylaw amendments since the last AGM. While many of these requests did not and will not impact Thorncliff, some will (e.g. tiny houses) and the League responded with our community's comments and concerns.

A number of open houses, meet and greet, workshops, and seminars were attended on behalf of the League such as Health and Physical Spaces (Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues) in March, Planning Workshop (City of Edmonton Planning) in June, and Community Standards Information Evening (City of Edmonton Bylaw). In February, Randy Niederhaus, Sharon Quickfall and a number of invited Thorncliff residents from the immediate area attended a City of Edmonton information gathering workshop on the Arrowhead Trail pedestrian overpass safety and visibility (graffiti, crime, winter footing, sight lines, etc.).

Litter Cans – Sharon Quickfall worked with the City to place a litter can on the South East corner of 175 Street and 87 Avenue to try to reduce the litter generated by Edmonton Transit users as they move between the WEM terminal and the eastbound stop across the street for the River Cree shuttle, school

buses and peak hour routes. Work continues to have litter cans placed along the Arrowhead and Mohawk Trails.

Grounds

Randy Niederhaus, Committee Chair

There is always plenty of work to be done in the Thorncliff Park throughout the year. Every season we replace and repair basket netting as the basketball rims are worn. We hope to replace the four rims next summer. Weeds always need whacking and there is of course an endless supply of litter to be picked up.

Vandals cut the fence encasing the racetrack area and the community garden from time to time which need to be repaired. We also get our fair share of vandalism and graffiti that needs to be tended to as soon as it occurs. Randy Niederhaus does a stellar job of keeping on top of all the grounds maintenance and we are indebted to him for his tireless work and countless volunteer hours.



City of Edmonton Annual Operating Grant

TCL's largest source of revenue is through the City of Edmonton Community League Operating Grant. Without out the City's generous support, there would be no Thorncliff Community League. Based on per capita, this past August the City gave us a grant of \$12,987.00. Our operating expenses for this past year were \$13,771.11 to do all the things mentioned in this report (and those not recorded).

TCL Board of Directors

(in order) Pam Winski, Sharon Quickfall, Jonathan Krenz, Margaret Tanwani, Randy and Darlene Niederhaus



Respectfully submitted by the TCL Board of Directors