



YOU @ HOME



A candy-making event for kids and AutumnFest are two of the events Heathwood has put on at its Traditions project in Milton.

Building community

Builder-sponsored events foster neighbourhood spirit

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“Pave paradise and put up a parking lot” just doesn’t cut it with today’s homebuyers. Their desire for instant gratification and a rising concern for the environment call for good urban planning, complete communities and walkable cities. Projects grab interest with buzzwords like “amenities” and “lifestyle.”

But just as it takes time to build a home, so too it takes time to build the promised amenities. Instead of walking trails and playgrounds, green grass and recreation centres, the earliest residents are greeted by staccato hammering and the rumble of machinery.

Increasingly, builders are stepping in to bridge the gap between construction site and community with special events designed to bring new neighbours together. When builders host these events, they build more than houses: they cultivate a sense of neighbourhood, establish relationships and friendships and create a place

people can call home.

In a new community, everyone is in the same boat: they’re all new kids on the block, looking to make new connections. Community events provide a catalyst. Barbecues and picnics introduce neighbour to neighbour over a burger or a game of soccer. Other activities may involve bringing in an interior designer to share decorating solutions for builder-beige homes or landscaping pros to help residents visualize fences and sod rather than mud.

Take, for example, Geranium Homes’ recent “Neighbourhoods in Bloom” event at its Cardinal Point development in Stouffville. The builder invited homeowners to the local park and gave them \$150 in “Geranium Dollars” with which to purchase their choice of annuals, perennials, shrubs and hanging baskets. They paired that with on-site advice and expertise from local garden centre staff and followed up with an afternoon barbecue. An early morning rainstorm did nothing to dampen homeowners’ enthusiasm; they turned out with wheelbarrows and wagons and proceeded to plant up a storm.