

TOWN OF STONY PLAIN
COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

NOURISHING CONNECTIONS

2026

WHAT WE HEARD

On January 29, 59 participants gathered to explore how simple everyday connections can boost confidence, build resilience, and create a stronger sense of belonging. The session, featuring activities by the GENWELL Human Connection Movement, focused on how connection strengthens inner well-being and empowers everyone to lead inclusive, tight-knit communities. The event was free, included supper, and offered practical tools for fostering meaningful connections.

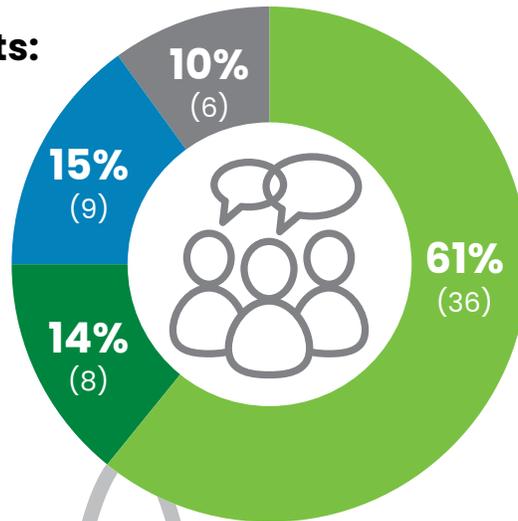


stonypain.com/Connect

NOURISHING CONNECTIONS

Participating residents:

- STONY PLAIN
- PARKLAND COUNTY
- SPRUCE GROVE
- OTHER



OUTCOMES:

- Everyone (**100%**) said the event showed them the importance of connection for community
- Almost all participants (**97%**) felt inspired to take action after the event
- All attendees (**100%**) were satisfied with the event overall
- Most participants (**95%**) found the event easy to access

WHY PEOPLE CAME:

People came because they value connection, enjoy these events, were personally invited, and want to stay engaged in the Stony Plain community.

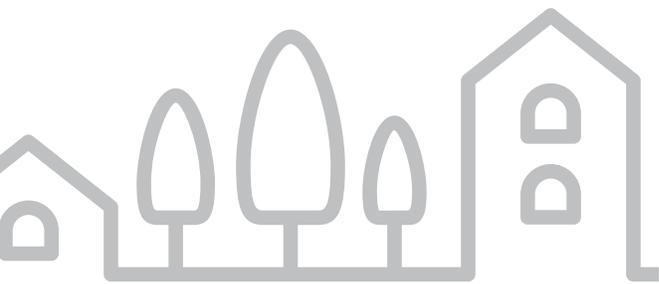
WHAT PEOPLE LIKED ABOUT THE EVENT:

- **Human Connection** – Meeting, talking, and connecting with community members and staff
- **Speaker & Presentation** – Engaging, informative, inspiring; eye-opening stats on loneliness and social connection

- **Interactive Activities** – Table discussions, roundtables, brainstorming, and structured prompts
- **Action & Takeaways** – Ideas to improve personal, social, and community connections; motivation to act
- **Learning & Awareness** – Understanding community strengths, different perspectives, and the health impacts of isolation
- **Overall Experience** – Educational, accessible, well-facilitated; shared meals and informal chats helped break barriers

Key takeaways from the event

- 1. Human connection is essential to health, resilience, belonging and well-being
- 2. Everyone has a role to play in creating a welcoming and connected community



- 3. Connection leads to meaningful, lasting community change
- 4. Small actions create lasting impact

PARTICIPANT QUOTES:

Thank you for an engaging evening, so enjoyed it!

Thank you I loved that Stony Plain hosts and creates events like these

Thank you it is so hopeful. That is what we need, hope!

Thank you for hosting, I will be back next year!

Love, love, love this event!





What we heard

WHAT PEOPLE LOVE ABOUT STONY PLAIN

People love that Stony Plain feels like home — small, friendly, inclusive, and well cared for — while still offering the services and amenities people need close by:

- small-town feel with a strong sense of community
- heart and intimacy of the community
- openness to diversity
- walkability, accessibility, and convenience

WHAT PEOPLE DREAM FOR STONY PLAIN

People want Stony Plain to stay warm, safe, and small-town in spirit — but with more opportunities, more activities, stronger supports, and room to grow successfully.

WHERE PEOPLE CURRENTLY CONNECT IN STONY PLAIN

Face-to-face relationships, local events, and everyday gathering places.

KEY CONNECTION STRENGTHS IN STONY PLAIN

- **Strong community spirit and pride:** People value the small-town feel, long-term neighbourhood connections, friendliness, inclusivity, and the sense of safety and trust. Residents feel welcome and connected across all ages.
- **Vibrant events and activities:** Festivals, Midsummer Thursdays, Farmers' Day, tree lightings, music events, sports, and community celebrations are central to local life, bringing people together.
- **Active community organizations and volunteerism:** Nonprofits, service clubs, church groups, and other community boards provide leadership, opportunities to volunteer, and ways to engage residents.
- **Accessible amenities and public spaces:** Libraries, parks, walking trails, sports facilities, museums, and downtown shops create spaces for recreation, learning, and socializing.
- **Strong leadership and civic engagement:** Local government, including the mayor and councillors, is involved, transparent, and supportive of residents, reinforcing connection and community pride.
- **Diversity and inclusivity:** Multi-cultural initiatives, Indigenous partnerships, and programs for youth, seniors, and people with mental health or social challenges help the community feel welcoming and supportive for everyone.
- **Heritage, culture, and identity:** Historic sites, murals, heritage parks, and cultural programs contribute to a sense of identity and belonging.

WHERE ARE CONNECTIONS FRAGILE?

Overall, the community has activities and strengths, but additional work can be done to further strengthen connections—especially in areas of access, awareness, affordability, and inclusion.

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CONNECTION GAPS IN STONY PLAIN

- **Limited time and busy lifestyles:** Many residents feel there's less opportunity to connect due to busy schedules and the faster pace of life.
- **Youth and senior engagement:** There is a lack of activities, spaces, and events that appeal to youth and seniors, especially in the evenings, limiting intergenerational connection.
- **Transportation barriers:** Transportation challenges, winter conditions, physical accessibility, and urban layout (e.g., overpass gaps, spread-out businesses) make it harder for some residents to participate.
- **Communication and awareness:** Residents often don't know what opportunities exist due to unclear or outdated information, limited use of effective communication tools, and reliance on word-of-mouth.
- **Social and cultural barriers:** Social anxiety, fear of rejection, generational divides, language and cultural differences, and stigma around homelessness, mental health, or disabilities reduce participation and inclusion.
- **Gathering spaces:** Few "third spaces" or free play areas, and limited adult or intergenerational programs, make it harder for people to meet and connect casually.
- **Economic and systemic challenges:** Rising costs, affordability issues (housing, events, transportation), and gaps in social services limit opportunities for engagement and create inequities.

IDEAS TO STRENGTHEN CONNECTION

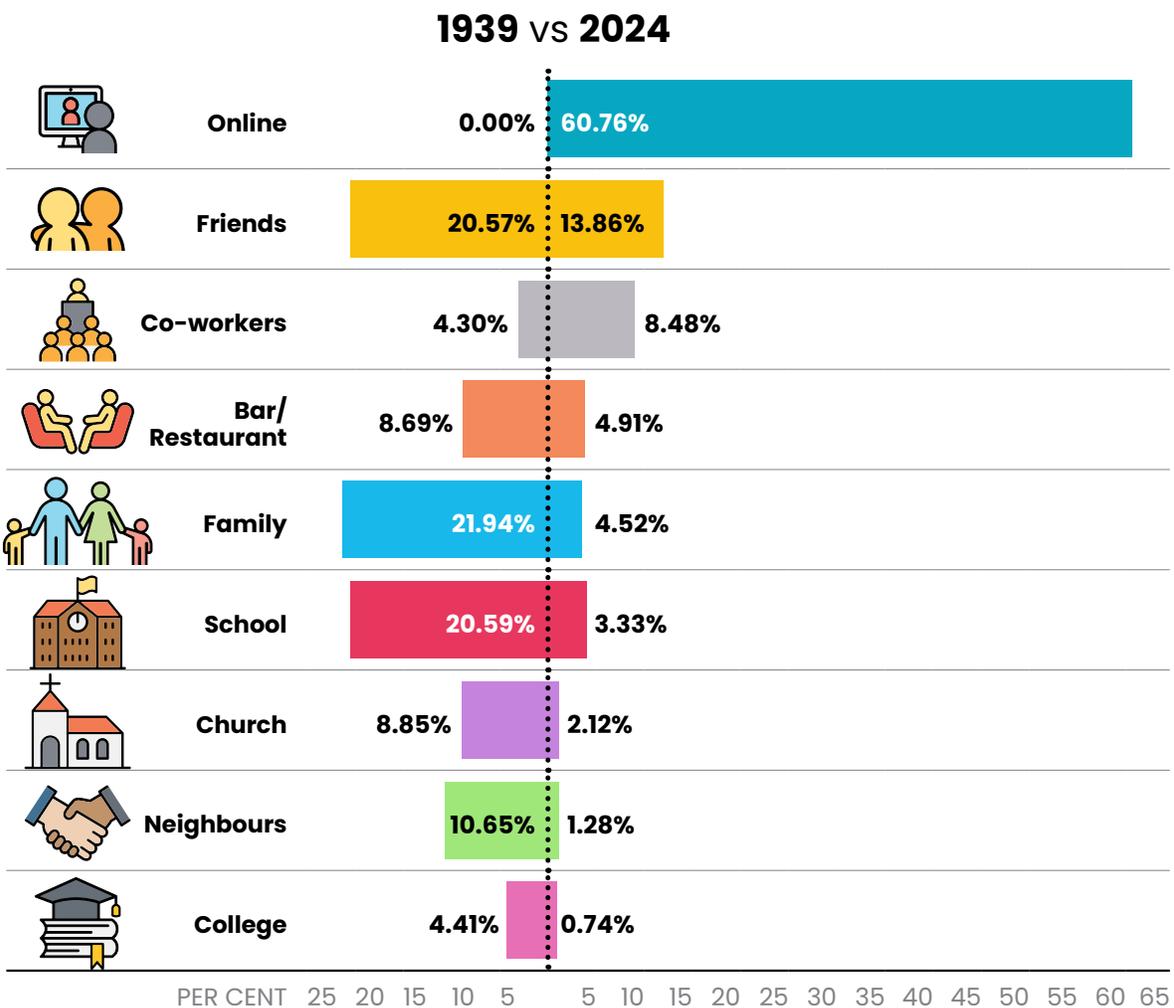
- More in-person community gatherings and shared spaces
- Bridging generations through structured programs
- Better, more accessible communication
- Intentional welcoming of newcomers and isolated residents
- Promoting everyday neighbourliness and volunteering

What participants want:

- More connected
- More welcoming connection
- More intergenerational
- More intentionality

From the GenWell presentation:

How people connect (people loved this graphic/reel)



Community Commitments

At the end of the event, participants added their commitments to a community wall. The following is a summary of those shared actions.

Say hello to neighbours | Compliment someone each day | Attend more community events | Call or check in on someone regularly | Invite friends to attend community events | Volunteer for a community event | Start a conversation with a stranger | Pay it forward at a local business | Bring something over to a neighbour | Smile and greet people on the street or trail | Volunteer in schools or community programs | Get to know neighbours by name | Stop and talk instead of just waving | Send someone a quick “thinking of you” message | Find a new place to volunteer | Share information about local events | Help others learn what is happening in the community | Promote local events through word of mouth | Organize community watch parties for sports or TV | Host neighbourhood gatherings | Learn how to organize a block party | Encourage youth to support younger children | Connect schools with older adults | Explore programs like “Adopt a Grandparent” |





Create opportunities for people to sing or share hobbies together | Start a new club or activity group | Start new recreation activities in the community | Create welcoming spaces for people to gather | Explore creating a Men's Shed | Create opportunities for community learning or workshops | Support education around hospice and palliative care | Support suicide prevention awareness and advocacy | Encourage in-person connection over digital connection | Help people feel welcome and included | Take pride in the community | Take the lead in organizing community activities | Help small groups work together | Encourage others to get involved | Share positive stories about the community | Connect people with supports and services | Share community resources with others | Volunteer in parks or heritage spaces | Use posters, radio, and print to spread community news | Offer small acts of kindness | Visit seniors in the community | Invite someone who may feel alone to join an activity | Hold the door for someone | Check in on isolated neighbours and seniors

