

Celebrations!

Aside from a opportunity to relax and recharge, the celebration of a community development achievement can be event that honours, motivates, and builds relationships.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT things about community development is celebrating! Celebrations are a way to mark milestones, honour achievements, and acknowledge contributions. They are motivating for those involved, and infectious for those who aren't—yet.

Why are celebrations particularly important in community development work? Because it is slow work. And complex. And challenging. It can be discouraging, and it is sometimes very hard to observe progress. Searching for that discernable transformation or advancement of the vision is sometimes best attempted in a group celebration of the work itself!

Be inclusive in the celebration. If we're celebrating community development, we need to model its best practices. Spread the celebration around as much as possible, as that also helps in working up enthusiasm about the process, the people, and the event.

Recognition doesn't have to be expensive or engraved—it really is the thought that counts. The recognition gift often gets filed away, but what is remembered and treasured by recipients is the appreciation that is expressed in the act of recognition itself. Telling someone what you're

thankful for and appreciate about their actions, describing how they have made a difference, is the part most likely to be remembered.

Remember why you're celebrating and make that the focus. Multi-tasking is a way of life, especially in the community sector, but don't be

tempted to create multi-purpose celebrations. Fundraising events are different from celebrations: they should be specifically geared to be attractive to contributors and designed to inspire gifts. Keep your

celebration focused on community development and the people involved—they're what counts.

Remember the ABC's of event planning and hosting and you'll be able to relax and enjoy at your event: **A**nticipate as much as possible: start early in your planning, check the equipment, take time to do a site visit, remember that what can go wrong, might go wrong if you haven't anticipated the possibility. **B**ack-up Plans are essential to deal with those things that do go wrong. If you follow the first two, you'll not need the step of **C**risis Management. If it comes, take a breath and remember that it's all part of the community development process, and at some future point, you can celebrate your successful management of it! ■

“Celebrations honour and motivate. In community development, where opportunities are scarce and long-coming, celebrate when you can!”