

St. James Town Festival 2017

Festival Overview

The 2017 St. James Town Festival took place on a sunny Saturday in August this year (August 26th) from 2-7PM in the heart of St. James Town. This year's festival boasted 13 community performances, 20+ information booths, 2 Bouncy Castles, 4 hours of non-stop henna and face-painting activities, and a record breaking 78 volunteers! Over 13 awards were handed out, including 2 youth scholarships to University students whom were residents of St. James Town.



Celebrating St. James Town

Apart from being thoroughly entertained by multicultural performances and kids activities, people expressed that they actually learned new things about St. James Town, from information about service and programs, to new cultural foods and performances, and the feeling of community and togetherness. Generally, festival respondents seemed very satisfied with the SJT Festival (**65%** of survey respondents indicating that they were **very satisfied**, and **30%** indicating that they were Somewhat Satisfied with the Festival). See Appendix A for more details.

1. Location, Time and Logistics

For the second year in a row, the 2017 St. James Town Festival took place in the grassy parquette behind 200 Wellesley and Ontario Street. The permit was obtained from TCHC. The event venue was in the heart of St James Town and easily accessible to the community, hence provided a great place for people to celebrate. The event was held from 2:00PM to 7:00PM.

Tables, Tents and Chairs

- 300 chairs were rented this year due to last year's feedback (100 extra chairs)
- The stage rental worked well and was from Varsity Tents and rental
- Tables, small tents and chairs arrived from Apso rentals at 9:30am
- We rented 30 tables, and had 15 from YSM

Pay-what-you-can BBQ & Water Cooler

Two propane tanks were purchased and two BBQs were set up this year to cook the veggie dogs and hot dogs. This went smoothly and efficiently. The hot dogs were completed within the two hour time frame they were intended for (4PM-6PM). The pay-what-you-can ended up accumulating to \$63.50. The money went towards purchasing the veggie dogs (as they were not donated) and buns this year. 2 water coolers purchased and filled periodically with ice and water.

SPN Member resource Contribution/ budget

Reserve (2016)	\$4,765.76
Total Incoming Revenue 2017	\$5,143.08
Total Expenses 2017	\$6,828.49
Difference (2017 Reserve)	\$3,080.35

Table 1 Expenditures

The planning committee over-spent by \$1,685.41 in this year's festival. Compared to last year's festival, the main differences in expenditure included more petty cash expenditures (eg. purchase of two gas tanks for the two BBQs amounting to \$160) and the volunteer sub-committee spent more than in previous years for refreshments and supplies during volunteer orientation sessions; higher honorarium for 4 group performances (\$100 each); and finally, payment for the A/V services (\$500). In addition, although we received \$525 in gift-cards, and 700 donated hot dogs, as well as 84 slices of pizza, we still incurred a lot of expenses, indicating the Festival budget is actually larger than incoming revenue. See below table 2.

Fundraising/Donations and in-kind support

The donations sub-committee maintained previous year's contacts/donors and sent out invitation/donation letters ahead of time. They were able to obtain donations from the below vendors/companies. They also scoped out additional retailers for donations like Loblaws/Food Basics, No Frills, Rabba and Pizza Pizza, though with less success.

Donation Items	For whom/ utilization
7 boxes (84 slices) of pizza from Domino's Pizza	For the volunteers and staff
1 big canister of coffee from Starbucks	For Festival Participants
1 box (96 pcs) sample size Aveeno Lotion for the Volunteers	For the volunteers
700 donated hot dogs from Maple Leaf Farms	For volunteers and the pay-what-you-can hot dog handouts at 4-6PM
\$500 VISA Gift Cards from Medallion Corporation	For honorariums
No Frills \$25 Gift Card	For raffle prize

Table 2 – In kind donations

Logistics, Fundraising Recommendations:

- *It is recommended to start corporate donation asks in early 2018*
- *SPN should look at City Festival funding or a foundation to fund festival for future years*
- *Ask Maple Lodge Farms for Veggie dogs as well (or purchase these)*
- *Still should request the City of Toronto's Water Truck*
- *Strike up a specific sub-committee for BBQ and water to ensure better organization*
- *Rent more tables for next year*
- *Provide a budget to sub-committees determined on a total Festival budget. Purchase supplies only based on expected income.*
- *Clearer communication around bringing one's table to participating agencies at the festival*
- *Survey respondents commented on logistics and location as an area of improvement. (See Figure X in Appendix A). The most prominent feedback was about adding washrooms, and ensuring that the area is cleaner, with suggestions for making an announcement about general cleanliness. The latter can easily be incorporated into planning*

2. Planning & Collaboration

In May 2017, the SPN made a formal announcement that the SJT Festival planning committee was starting to plan this year's festivities.

Name	Affiliation	Sub-Committee
Armela Marano	Thornccliffe Neighbourhood Office	Fundraising Sub-Committee
Nassim Vahidi	Women's Health in Women's Hands	Performance and special vendors Sub-Committee
Sathyan Arulvarathan	Trinity Life Church	Performance and special vendors Sub-Committee
Ahmad Siroos	The Corner	Outreach Sub-Committee
Robert Dumaresq	Resident/ volunteer	Volunteer Sub-Committee
Rafiya Asad	Sherbourne Health Centre/ The Corner	Volunteer subcommittee & Outreach/ Donations Sub-committee
Robb Johannes	Fred Victor	Promotion/ Outreach Sub-Committee
Norma Khandaker	Progress Place	Awards Sub-Committee
Minara Begum	Hospice Toronto	Volunteer Sub-Committee
Nayanthi Wijesuriya	Health Access/ The Corner	Logistics Sub-Committee
Natasha Mercy	Yonge Street Mission	Festival Co-Chair/ Logistics Sub-Committee
Diana Mavunduse	Dixon Hall	Festival Co-Chair/ Logistics Sub-Committee, Outreach Sub-Committee
Chelladurai Yogarajah	Resident	General
Christina Abate	The Corner	Volunteer Sub-Committee
Christina Tran	Sherbourne Health Centre	Food Vendor Sub-Committee
Sehr Athar	Shebourne Health Centre	Logistics, Outreach and Fundraising Sub-Committee
Ledya Mahadere	WHIWH	Performance and special vendors Sub-Committee
Natasha Lawrence	WHIWH	Performance and special vendors Sub-Committee
Rebekah Fallaise	WHIWH	Performance and special vendors Sub-Committee
Rick Latif	Resident	Performance and special vendors Sub-Committee

Table 3- Planning Committee Members

Recommendations and lessons learned for Festival Planning:

- *Develop a resident engagement/ community member participant planning committee (eg. post a volunteer call-out)*
- *Engage SPN earlier on to participate and contribute, including having Festival as a standing agenda item at SPN*

- *Develop a stronger relationship with a First Nations organization, to ensure indigenous representation at the Festival and within the Planning*

3. Promotion, Publicity and Outreach



A planning committee member designed the celebratory Festival poster this year. 200 large posters and 2000 handbills were printed at Imperial Graphics for roughly \$112.

This year the festival had strong social media presence 1.5 months leading up to the Festival. The Cabbagetown BIA helped in tweeting and retweeting the Festival hashtags, as did some of the PR/Communications departments of SJTSPN agencies. The two hashtags were used: #worldwithinablock and #SJTfest2017. The hashtags were placed on bright posters at the festival so that participants could also live tweet and Instagram.

This year’s Festival also engaged approximately 35 local businesses along Wellesley Street and Parliament (from Wellesley and Parliament to Carlton). Many agreed to put up the poster in their storefront windows. Outreach was mainly

conducted by The Corner’s outreach staff, with summer student and volunteer support. Over 30 hours in August alone were dedicated to Festival outreach, and tabling outreach sessions were conducted in the lobbies of over 10 buildings in August. It was helpful to have summer students involved in Festival promotion.



Similar to previous years, the top ways that people heard about the Festival included friends/family (eg. word of mouth), flyer/poster in buildings, and by “walking by” the event itself (see Figure 1). This indicates that flyer/poster outreach and promotion is really important, and having the event in the heart of St. James Town will draw people out during the day.

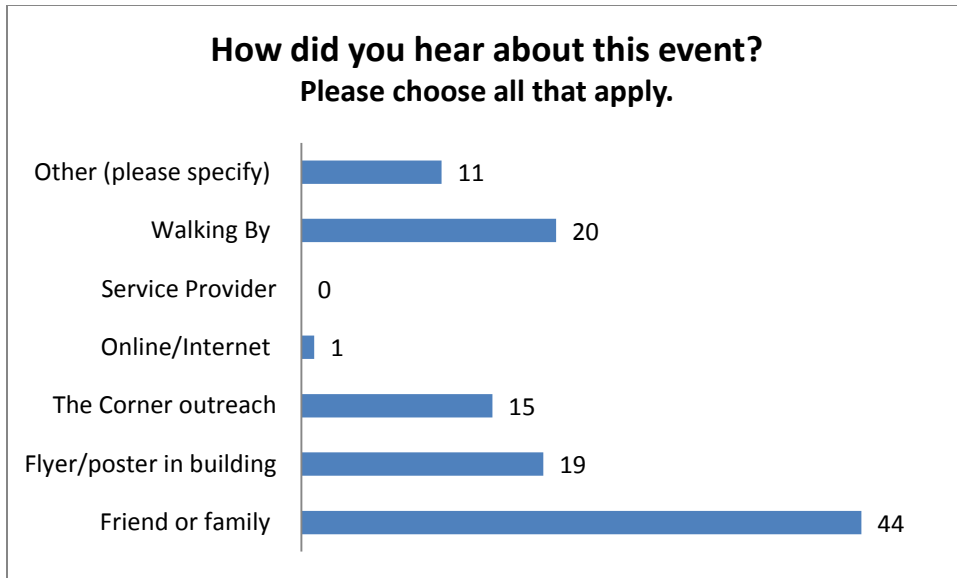


Figure 1

Publicity and Promotion Recommendations and Lessons learned

- *Small flyers were all distributed, but the larger flyers did not all get posted, so we do not need as many large flyers next year*
- *Suggestion to increase attendance: organize a band to kick off event, go around the neighbourhood, and post a festival day 'agenda' around the neighbourhood*
- *While some agencies actively promoted the event on twitter (eg. retweeting and tweeting), next year all SPN agencies should connect with their communications and PR departments to promote the event*
- *Design the poster by early Spring to begin promotion early*

4. Performances

In total, we had 12 performances, with one day of cancellation, amounting to eleven performances in total on the day of the festival. Four of the eleven performances were solo performances (dancing, singing, and playing an instrument). The remaining seven performances were groups, including dance groups, a karate performance, bands, and a fashion show. Overall, performances were very successful, and the audience was quite large. Sound equipment worked very well, and performers connected with our sound technician prior to the festival to ensure the music was functional. The performers were eager to share their talents and they were amazing! We suggest inviting them back next year, as well as engaging with various cultural groups in the community to continue to involve new faces in the performance lineup.

Performer Name	Type of Performance
Hong Soo	Flute Solo of "Oh Canada"
Danger Storm Band	Music Band
Chinese Seniors Association	Cultural Dance and Solo performance
Linda	Solo Performance
Rajani and group	Karate Performance
Lucky's Tamil Dance Group	Cultural Dance Performance
Sumedha	Traditional Cultural Solo Dance Performance
Chinese seniors Association	Choreographed Fashion Show
Wendy Belcourt	Solo Song Performance
Meghala Hoskot and Children	

Table 4- Performances

- Two audition dates were held prior to the festival, on August 4th and 5th, though not all performers came to the auditions and our committee had to follow up with them after these dates.
- Each solo performer was given an honorarium of \$25, duets \$50 and groups of 3 or more were given \$100. This was decided based on the determination that our festival is community-based and community-funded, and the honoraria are considered a token of appreciation for contribution to one's own community as opposed to remuneration for a performance. Some groups had over 10 members, and some had two or three.

Performances Recommendations and Lessons Learned:

- *It would have been challenging to provide each person performing (solo or in a group) with \$25, due to funding. However, some performers did express that the honorarium could be higher.*
- *Have one member of the performance sub-committee be the point person for honoraria*
- *A few noise complaints could be avoided if perhaps flyers were delivered to the lower level apartments in the surrounding neighbourhood, informing them of our event and possible sound disruption.*
- *More coordination beforehand re: MC and A/V and sound, MC should receive info much earlier.*
- *A/V booths need to be on other side of stage. DJ and A/V lead couldn't use the tables in the sun until the sun went away. Equipment gets too hot*
- *Ensure stage hand volunteers receive proper training and work closely with A/V lead (eg. make themselves available to them)*
- *Stage manager needed, and/or more resources on the stage*
- *Consider sharing MC responsibilities (or co-MC's)*



5. Awards Ceremony

The St. James Town Community Awards were created in order to recognize exceptional contribution by community members and groups that have created positive changes in the St. James Town Community. An Awards Subcommittee was created that comprised of five agency staff, 3 residents, students and volunteers. Calls for nominations were open for four weeks with nominations being accepted electronically or by dropping the hard copy in a drop box at the Corner.



Committee Members did a great job with the selection, outreach and assisting the committee needs. 21 nominations were received from the different categories. At the Awards Ceremony, our Community Ambassadors handed out nine plaques and two Scholarships awards (*see Table 4*).

Community Awards 2017					
Award Name	SJT Change Makers: Youth	SJT Change Maker: Senior	SJT Change Maker: Newcomer	SJT Change Maker: LGBTQ	SJT Group Award: Big Business
Award Recipient	Pavishan Balarajah	Elana Oliva	Touran Norowzi	Robert Dumaresq	Tania Waldock (House on Parliament)
Award Name	SJT Change Maker: Women	SJT Change Maker: Men	SJT Advocate	SJT Group Award : Local (Small) Business	
Award Recipient	Niru Kumari	Zaid Mohamed	Amna Shah	Leonida Sabinorio McNabb Less than 10 employees (Philippine Variety Store)	
SJT Scholarships 2017 Awards				Scholarship Recipient:	
1) For Community Engagement/Leadership				Eashmana Choudhury- Ryerson University	
2) For Creative/Artistic Contribution				Zouahl Kayoumi- Ryerson University	

Table 5- Awards and honorariums

Awards Recommendations and Lessons Learned:

- *To consult with the school principals for the scholarship awards.*
- *To have more than 4 weeks for the nomination process and engage SPN members early in nominating residents for awards*
- *Consider creative strategy for award recognition (who is handing out awards, with an idea of EDs/ Agency Leads to hand out the awards)*

6. Volunteer Coordination/ Recognition

A volunteer subcommittee was responsible to work on recruiting and assigning volunteers to each activities we had at the festival and requested by each sub committees. A general application paper was placed at The Corner so that interested volunteers who have read the call out Festival posters or heard about the St. James Town Festival can come and fill out the form. In addition to that, the Volunteer Resources Coordinator at The Yonge Street Mission helped the team by putting the volunteer's application form up on Volunteers Toronto website using the Google form so we were able to get so many applications with in short period of time.

- A **total of 70** volunteers during the festival. These included The Corner volunteers, volunteers from the community (mostly seniors), and volunteers from other parts of Toronto like international students and high school students as well as university students, and young professionals during the festival.
- Four Orientation sessions were conducted on **August 15, 16, 23 and 24, 2017.**

- **57 Volunteers** attended the orientation sessions and were given shifts for their tasks.
- **9 volunteers from Trinity Life Church** to help with the clean-up of the Park (one representing the team attended orientation).
- During the orientation sessions the committee **spent \$ 204.30 for refreshments**.
- On August 25th, 2017, the St. James Town Festival Planning Committee organized a Festival **volunteers appreciation dinner**. The power-point of festival highlights was shared by the new SPN Co-chairs, and certificates were provided. Approximately 20 volunteers attended.

Volunteer Recommendations and Lessons Learned:

- *Using external website sources (like Volunteer Toronto) to post the volunteer application was very helpful to reach out so many volunteers, especially ones from other parts of the city*
- *Conducting orientations and finalizing everything one week before the festival day so that it's possible to send out e-mails to volunteers who will be participating at the festival day along with their roles and shifts and to receive confirmation e-mails from them.*
- *Volunteer sub-committee needs a lot of participants*
- *Ensure that volunteers recruited have clear roles and tasks during the Festival*



7. Service Provider Information Booths

As the SJTSPN plays a significant role in the festival, one of the objectives has been to get information to residents about services, programs, resources and community initiatives. There were over 30 agencies represented at the Festival this year. Some tents/tables were organized by sub-committee, for example the Health Access partners all shared a table, tent etc. as well as the Seniors' Sub-Committee and Youth Sub-Committee.



Festival feedback indicated that the interactive games that service providers provided at the booths were very popular. When asked **if you learned anything new about St. James Town today on the festival survey, 35% indicated that they learned about new programs and services!**

Overall Festival feedback was positive amongst participating service providers was positive. Survey feedback indicated that they felt supported by SPN in the planning. However there was some general feedback regarding clearer communication to service providers whom were attending with a table/booth.

Recommendations for Service Provider Information Booths

- *Have better signage for the which booths are available at the event for participants so that Festival goers are better oriented*
- *Clearer communication around agency/table participation and fee associated with Festival participation*



8. Special activities and activity vendors

The following activities took place at the Festival and were very popular. There were two bouncy castles this year with non-stop attendance. In fact, kids activities' was one of the favourite aspects of the festival from festival feedback participants (see Figure 5 in the Appendix), and within that theme, the bouncy castle specifically was frequently mentioned. In addition, we also had henna painters and face-painters; they also had long lineups of children and were very popular. In addition, there were ring toss and other such games at the Kids Area, and members of the SPN Youth Network distributing a survey.



- *Henna*
- *Face-Painting*
- *Storytime by the Toronto Public Library*
- *Pay-what-you-can hot dogs*
- *Games at the Kids Area*
- *Bouncy Castles – 2 this year*

Recommendations regarding special activities and activity vendors:

- *Due to the popular nature of henna and face-painting, planning committee should book the vendors for longer consider appropriate compensation next year.*
- *Keep Henna and Face Painting separate from Vendor Sub-Committee as they are being paid for the time, service and supplies. Ensure that adequate compensation is provided for Henna and Face Painters.*
- *Ensure that the Storytime starts before the Bouncy Castle activity so that children participate*
- *Within Kids' Activities, people wanted to see more children's activities and games, given the lineups. People also wanted to see more activities for pre-teens and teenagers.*
- *“More performances for teens - pop cultures. More interactive activities for teens/youths.”*
- *“more fun activities for pre-teens eg. art booth”*



9. Food & Craft Vendors

Each year, local food vendors are selected and trained by the Community Dietician at Sherbourne Health Centre, to sell culturally-diverse and tasty foods. This year the food vendors sold out, which was a success! In addition, festival participants rated food as one of their favourite aspects of the Festival, following performances and side –by-side with kids’ activities.



- ✓ *“Diversity of food, acts, etc!”*
- ✓ *“yummy food”*
- ✓ *“food, specially Indian food”*

There were 7 Food Vendors whom participated in the St. James Town Festival this year. See Table 5 below.

Vendor Name	Food
Deeksha	- Vegetables Puffs - Muffin Sundaes (served with ice cream) - French Fries
Namita	- Falooda Kulfi
Priyanka	- Samosas - Chat Papadi
Sabita	- Momo (Nepali Dumpling)
Neha	- Pani Puri - Sev Puri
Snehal	- Vada Pav
Delores	- Beef Patty - Lemon Cake; Corn Bread - Sweet Iced Tea

Table 6- Vendor Names and Food served

Craft Vendor Summary

of craft vendors present at festival: 2

Name	Craft
Leonora	Handmade clothing
Faye	Handmade jewelry and clothing

Recommendations and Lessons Learned:

- *Food vendors were wonderful to work with, they are a very understanding and hardworking group*
- *Food vendors should all attend a 1-hour training to go over basic food safety (e.g. handwashing, wearing gloves, handling money, etc.), list of items being sold to avoid duplication, and general healthy eating tips.*
- *As with last year, craft vendors were incorporated into the food vendor coordination.*
- *Craft vendors generally enjoyed the exposure/experience, craft vendors do not really need a formal training aside from a handout/email/phone call on details of the day*
- *New this year, the BBQ was pushed to 4 PM and “pay what you can” was enforced in order to provide the food vendors with more exposure and less competition.*
- *At the same time, for areas of Festival improvement, festival feedback participants continue to express a desire for more food at the festival and more diversity of food, “from different communities” for example.*

Appendix A: Feedback for Service Provision

The annual St. James Town Festival evaluation survey, lead by Health Access St. James Town, also enables service providers to take the pulse of the community. There are two open-ended questions that are intended to garner feedback from residents on what service providers can do to better meet the needs of the community.

Q7. What is one program or service you wish you could see in St. James Town?

There were 68 responses to this open ended question.

Programs - *Kid's programming from dance to cultural and youth programs were the most popular response, followed by programs for special populations, and employment programs.*

- **Kid's Programming**
 - **Dance programs**- mentioned many time, with a specific suggestion of "ballet dancing class for children"
 - **Language/ cultural**- "Afterschool cultural program/language program for Bengali children"/ "more conversation classes"
- **Youth programming** - "A business program for youth age 7 onwards", "Space for youth to discuss current issues/neighbourhood problem/youth justice related programs," "teenage cooking program"
- **Programs for special groups included:** mothers (eg. "a henna program"), elderly (eg. "games that are for older people").
- **Employment programs**- "more job fair/job related events/ workshops"

Services- *Within services, health services was mentioned the most times, followed by seniors services*

1. **Health services**- specific health related suggestions included subsidized physiotherapy clinics, and "Permanent nurses at the CC"
2. **Seniors Services**- specific suggestions included general aid, support using computers and better security services.
3. **Additional service suggestions included:** language training, job fairs, settlement services, beauty parlour and free food, and language training.
4. **Unique service ideas:** Book drives, flower gardens

Q8. What can agencies do to better meet the needs of residents in St. James Town?

There were 61 responses to this question. The responses were categorized into 6 thematic areas below.

- 1. Specialized services/supports and programs-** *Survey respondents highlighted supports for specific sub-populations. These included:*
 - Children -- “help more with the children who really need family assistance”/ kids programs specially in winter
 - Youth -- More scholarship program for students.
 - Refugees -- “refugee services”
 - Newcomers -- “legal services for newcomers”/ “More language trainings in more language options”
 - Health -- “healthcare for the elderly”/ “health”
 - Seniors -- “too many senior citizens with no direct help”/ “healthcare for the elderly”
 - Adult Employment -- “Allow more access for ppl over age 29 to find employment.”
 - Building-specific—“Community Services at 200 Wellesley”
 - General -- more variation in programming
- 2. Neighbourhood infrastructure and Improvement** – *Survey respondents also highlighted the on-going need for resources and supports to improve the infrastructure, health and safety of the neighbourhood.*
 - Funding—“more funding for stuff”/ “more money”
 - Benches – “Get rid of the benches (9 ft. from the door) in front of 200 Wellesley”
 - Safety – “improve safety of SJT, too much violence”/ “security”/ “security - peace + order, more organization”
 - Cleanliness & Pest Control – “More clean environment”/ “get rid of the rats nest”
 - Neighbourhood Recreation – “Renovate pool and remove abandoned tennis court”/ “pool and play area for kids”
- 3. Outreach** – *People wanted to see more readily available information about programs and services throughout the neighbourhood.*
Eg. “better outreach”, “more outreach” about programs, posting the flyer for programs in “churches, schools and stores”
- 4. Community events** – *Survey respondents expressed wanting to see more activities in the summer (eg. “an event every month”), gifts at the events for kids and coffee for adults, and generally more events for kids.*

Community Events

- “Cultural performances, dances”
- “Parties every 3 to 6 months”

- “Really good activities for kids, like these festivals, more offer
- “More kids show like talented kids”

5. **Community/ Resident engagement** – *The final theme was around listening, meeting and engaging residents. Suggestions included:*

- “To have regular meeting with the residents of St James Town”
- “convince the neighborhood to participate the diff program”
- “listen better to what’s needed”
- “be kind to volunteers”

Appendix B: Festival Feedback from Participants

Demographic of Survey Participants

102 surveys were administered to festival attendees by the Health Access Intake Team and dedicated volunteers. The team received a brief training on the survey objectives. Results were entered manually into survey monkey for analysis by members of the team and dedicated research assistant volunteers.

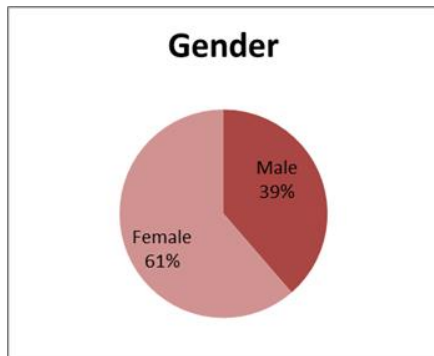


Figure 2- Self-identified gender of Festival survey participants

AGE RANGE	%
61+	14.10%
51-60	14.10%
41-50	12.00%
31-40	37.00%
21-30	19%
11--20	4.35%

Table 7- Age range of Festival Participants

84% of survey respondents were from St. James Town, and 16% lived outside of St. James Town, which is different than in previous years, indicating festival participants are attending from other parts of Toronto. The following map (Figure 3) indicates the common postal code areas where survey respondents live within St. James Town.

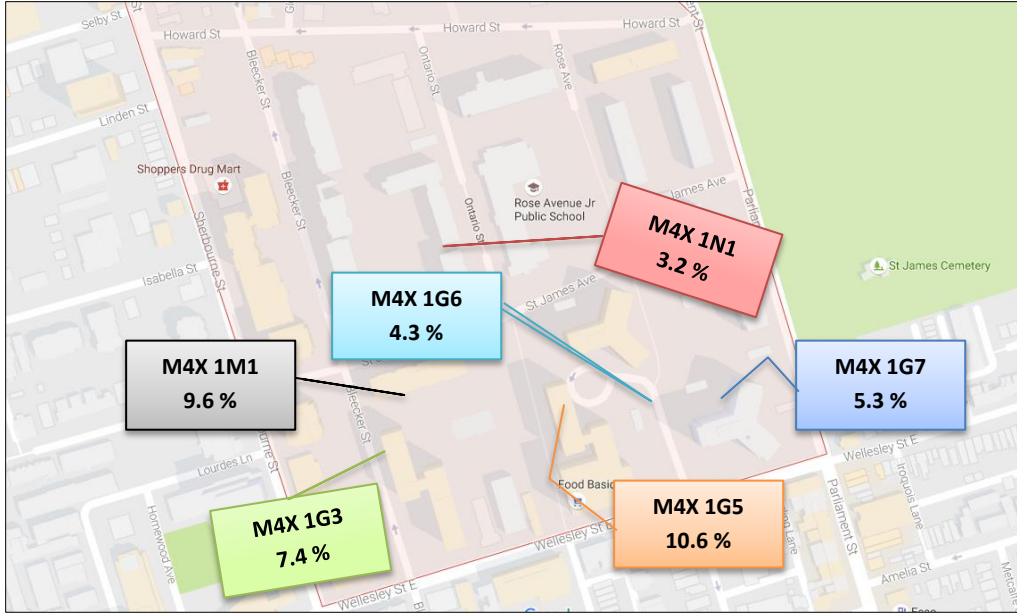


Figure 3- Top postal codes of Survey respondents

Overall satisfaction

How satisfied were you with the St. James Town 2017 Festival overall?

Answered: 99 Skipped: 1

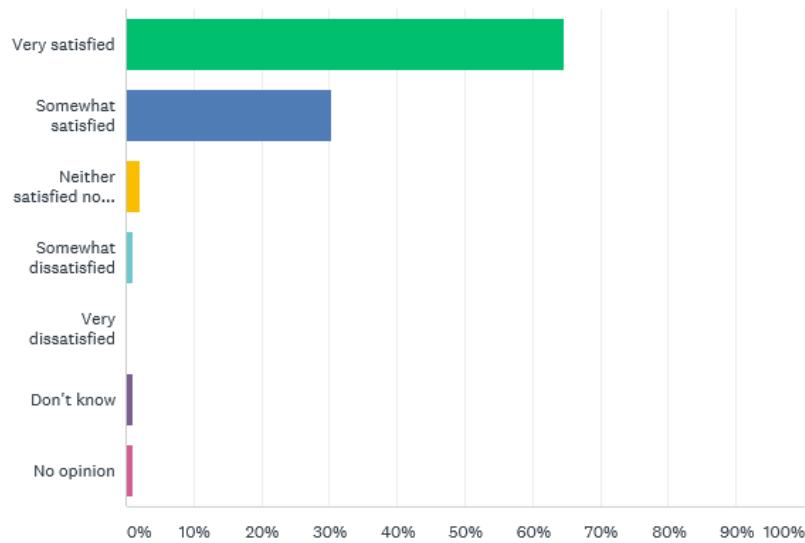


Figure 4- Overall satisfaction

Favourite Aspects of the Festival

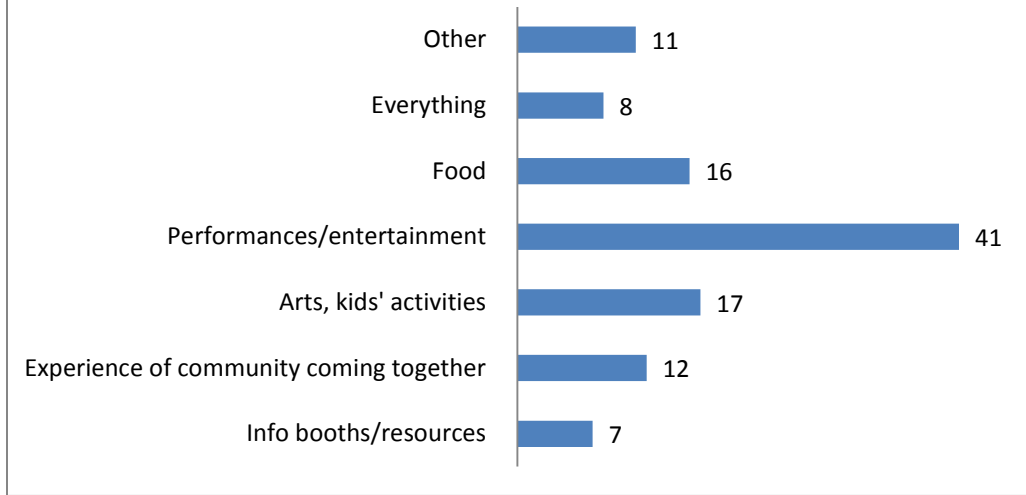


Figure 5- Favourite Aspects of the Festival

Figure 6- Favourite Aspect of the Festival- Performances, broken down by type of performance

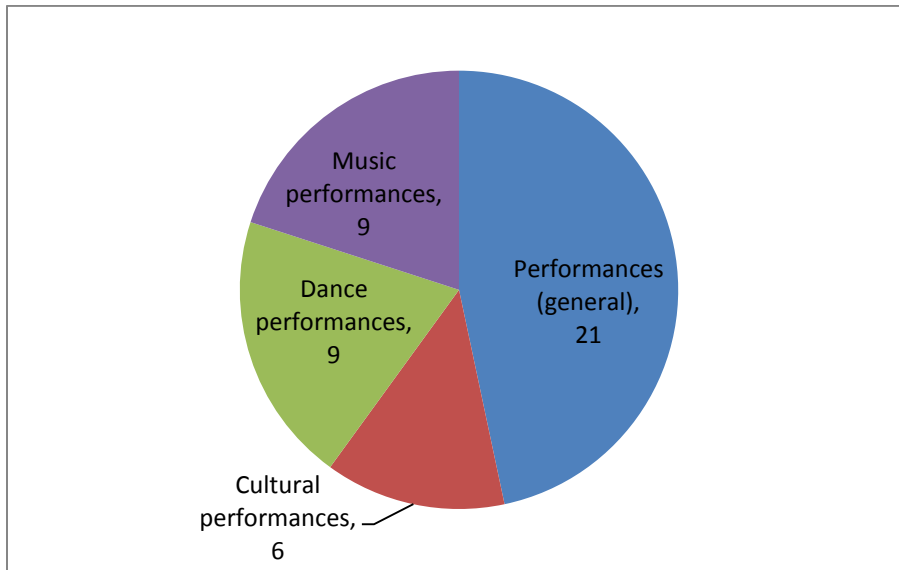
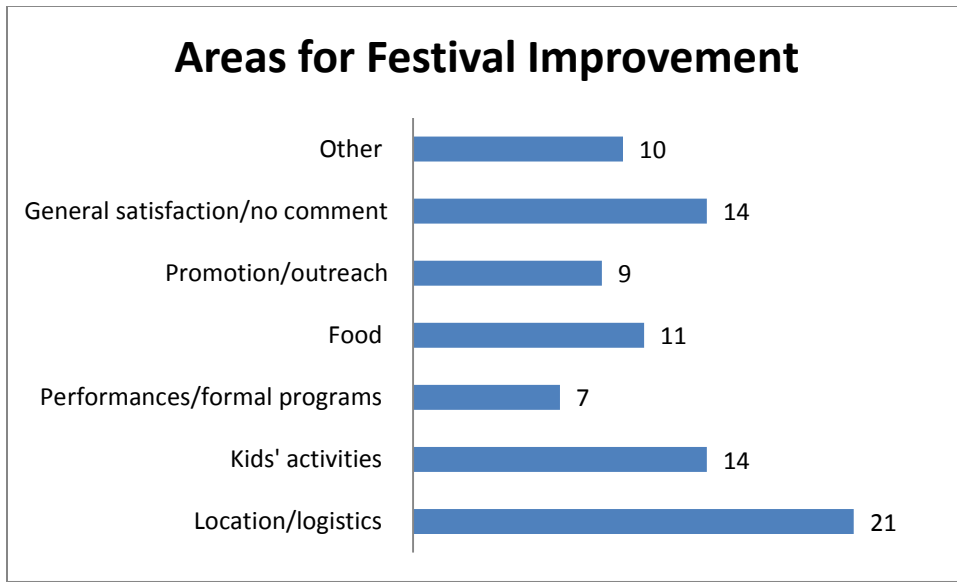


Figure 7- Areas of Festival improvement



For more information, please contact the St. James Town Service Providers' Network, <http://www.stjamestown.org/about-sjtspn/>.