

St. James Town's 2018 Festival Executive Summary Report



Artwork by Mehdia Hassan, St. James Town resident, showcased at the St. James Town Festival

This report was prepared by the St. James Town 2018 Festival Planning Committee- a working group of the St. James Town Service Providers' Network. We would like to thank the SJTSPN member agencies, local sponsors and hard working volunteers and performers for executing another successful festival this year!



Festival Overview

Every year, the St. James Town Service Providers' Network (SJTSPN) and a group of residents of St. James Town (SJT) host a Festival to celebrate and promote diversity in SJT. This year, with planning starting as early as December 2017 and with the help of over 50 volunteers, mostly local community members, the 8th annual SJT Festival took place. This year's Festival theme was *World Within a Block*, with over 15 colourful musical and dance performances on stage- representing various cultural heritages, 9 local food vendors serving diverse food, and 30 community partners showcasing their services or engaging residents in interactive activities.



Along with showcasing cultural foods and performances, and promoting a sense of community and togetherness, the Festival presented entertainment and kid's activities as well as information and services about programs available to community residents. This year's festival date was also shared with the Cabbagetown Festival to showcase and profile St. James Town to a much wider audience.

St. James Town Service Providers' Network

The SJT Service Provider's Network is a group of service providers and community members who work together in supporting the growth, health and safety of the SJT community. They work collaboratively in developing and implementing initiatives that engage and support the residents of SJT. The planning of the Festival also consisted of committees and sub-committees. This year, the St. James Town Community Ambassadors – local residents who conduct outreach and community engagement- were invited to take on more leadership roles with the planning aspects of Festival, sitting on Sub-Committees as well as Co-Chairing the overall Festival. For the first year, the Festival had a resident Co-Chair role, Deeksha Gupta.

Fundraising & Donations

This year, the Festival planning committee also had a donations/contributions subcommittee. Given that the Festival every year is a grass-roots led event, majority of contributions are from SPNSPN agency member contributions, and local businesses that are approached. Local food establishments were invited to donate a dish toward the volunteer lunch, which was well received, and other businesses contributed by providing miscellaneous items. Businesses that contributed were recognized on posters and on social media leading up to the event.

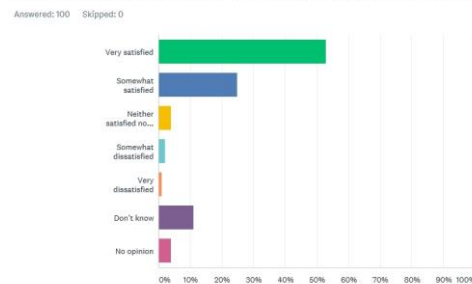


Festival Budget and Expenditure 2018	
Total Incoming Revenue 2018	\$6,170
Total incoming revenue in Gift Card	\$750
Total Expenses 2018 (including gift card expenditure)	\$5454.27

Festival Attendee Feedback

Every year, Health Access St. James Town – a subcommittee of the SJTSPN- implements a survey to evaluate the Festival itself, but also to gather input from residents on service and program needs in SJT. This year’s survey included two additional questions to measure social isolation and connectedness and the data and feedback will be used to inform the provision of programs and services that residents would like to see and enhance in their community, like the Festival.

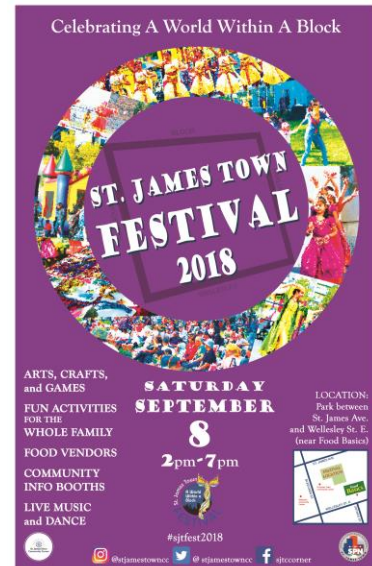
How satisfied were you with the St. James Town 2018 Festival overall?



Generally, survey responses from the Festival indicated that almost 50% of respondents felt a “very strong sense” of belonging and acceptance in their local community. To add, 55% of respondents felt **very satisfied** with the Festival overall. Participants were happy that the SJT Festival was a foundation for the community to come to together and increase feelings of connectedness. The big crowd was experienced to be a good way to showcase the diversity in the community and learn from different cultures. Festival feedback indicated that participants got to know new things about St. James Town, from information on important programs and services, to learning about the well connected St. James Town Service Providers’ Network.

Promotion, Publicity and Outreach

To promote the Festival, a number of different approaches were taken. A Facebook events page was created, generating a large number of people who indicated they were interested in the event. The Facebook event page was also shared in email signatures of committee members, and a 10 day countdown to the Festival was created on both The Corner's Twitter and Instagram account. The Festival poster was also put up in all 19 high rise buildings and local businesses showcased the posters in their windows in and around St. James Town. Postcards were also distributed to the students through two public schools; Winchester PS. and Rose Avenue PS. Majority of respondents said that they heard of the Festival through word of mouth from friends and family, followed by the flyers posted in the community and by "walking by" the event itself. This indicated that promotion and publicity were really important in creating awareness of the event through networking and street-level outreach, and that having the event in the heart of St. James Town will draw people out during the day.



Volunteer Coordination & Recognition



Volunteers are an integral part of the planning and execution of the Festival every year. Volunteer Toronto was also helpful in the recruitment, as well as Trinity Life Church. Three volunteer orientation sessions were held for the volunteers and volunteers (including performers) were provided with a warm lunch, certificates on the day of the Festival as well as volunteer appreciation dinner following the Festival.

Performances

This year's festival hosted a total of 15 community performances, consisting of both adults and children performing songs and dance! Majority of performers were from SJT, representing the community well. Two auditions were held, and from the auditions all individuals and groups were asked to perform. Due to budgetary restrictions, the Festival committee was unable to provide an honorarium to the performers, however all performers were provided with a lunch meal on the day of the Festival and invited back for a celebratory dinner to show appreciation. Majority of attendees indicated that the performances were their favourite aspect of the festival.



Awards Ceremony



member organizations.

To acknowledge the exceptional contributions of community members and groups who have created positive change in SJT between June 2017-June 2018, 7 *St. James Town Community Awards* and 2 scholarships were given at the Festival's Awards Ceremony. The scholarships, at a value of \$500 each were awarded to two individuals under 25 years of age who will be attending a post-secondary education in September 2018. These awards are handed out by the leadership of SJTSPN

Festival Activities & Food

The Festival organized special activities this year such as free face-painting, a henna booth, and a bouncy castle and local crafts vendors. In addition, a number of agencies took the lead in providing kid-friendly interactive games, arts and crafts activities at their booths.



The Festival also provided a variety of free-of-cost refreshments like hot dogs, pop corn, water and coffee. Every year the SJT Festival receives hot dog donations from Maple Leaf Farms.

In addition, each year a handful of residents showcase their cultural culinary skills by preparing and selling their food to the community. This year there were 9 food vendors whom offered delights like mango lassi (India), mo mo dumplings (Nepal), injera bread (Ethiopia) and jerk chicken (Jamaica). The hope is to provide these vendors with more training and opportunities to showcase their creativity! Survey feedback indicated that food be available for longer times, include more food and inclusion of different cultures. However, generally food at the Festival was also indicated as a favourite aspect by participants.












Join us next year!

This year's SJT Festival 2018 was a success. The Festival planning committee is always looking for new members, sponsors, and performances and services on the day of! The Festival provides an opportunity to learn about the different communities that make up SJT and come together in celebrating SJT's diversity. For more information about the St. James Town Festival, the St. James Town Service Providers' Network, and how to get involved and /or contribute to next year's Festival, please visit: <https://www.stjamestown.org/sjt-festival-2018/> or email: info@stjamestown.org.

2018 Planning Committee

The following agencies and groups made up the planning committee of the 2018 St. James Town Festival:

-  The Neighbourhood Organization
-  Hospice Toronto
-  Progress Place
-  The Corner/ Health Access St. James Town Team
-  The St. James Town Community Ambassadors
-  Dixon Hall
-  Fred Victor
-  Trinity Life Church
-  Sherbourne Health