



## How *Neighbourly* is Your Workplace? A Cross Country Check-Up & Challenge

### The [Neighbour @ Work](#) Challenge:

#### **Enter to win by submitting a story from your workplace!**

We challenge you to send us stories about people in your workplace doing something *neighbourly*. Please send in short stories – 200 words or less -- that describe how someone, or a group of people, made a difference to another, their team, or any number of others by acting in a neighbourly manner. (See the example story below for ideas.) Ideally, the story should be based on your experience over the past year.

### Background

When people at work behave as “neighbours” we see a tremendous reduction in stress and an increase in personal health and organizational productivity. Neighbourly behaviour is for everyone in the organization no matter what their position – we all need to be treated, and to treat others, as neighbours.

**What does neighbourly behaviour look like?** Dr. Martin Shain, SJD, Senior Scientist for Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, and Founder and Director of the Neighbour @ Work Centre, says that

**“When people at work think and feel that they are being treated fairly, they tend to also act in a “Neighbourly” fashion. That is, they:**

- Try to foresee how their words and actions will affect others
- Actively seek and make use of reasonably available information that will help them do this
- Listen attentively to other’s points of view
- And in so doing, try to understand the needs, claims, rights and interests of others
- Share information that is of material importance to others in a timely manner
- And expect to be treated the same way.”

### What you can do in your Workplace

During the month of September and during Canada’s Healthy Workplace Week in October, managers, team leaders or the Healthy Workplace Committee in your workplace can invite people to gather neighbourly stories and post them throughout the workplace. Encourage people to vote on the one or two if they wish to submit for **[the Neighbour @ Work Challenge](#)** (refer to the Cross Country Challenge Details below). Try to build some fun into this activity by rewarding/recognizing all who enter stories. This could be the beginning of a long-term strategy to improve the employment relationship in your workplace.



*For ideas on how to make an enduring difference, see [Long-Term Strategies – Neighbour@Work Initiative](#).*

### **Cross Country Challenge Details**

Please email your stories to Martin Shain at [shain@neighbouratwork.com](mailto:shain@neighbouratwork.com) identifying that this is part of the **Cross Country Check-Up: A Challenge about “How Neighbourly is Your Workplace?”** Let us know your city/town and province so we can credit the winners with a location. Deadlines: There will be 2 draws – one on **Friday, September 30, 2004** and a second on **Friday, November 5, 2004**. The winning stories as well as other selected stories will be posted on Canada’s Healthy Workplace Week website. Stories will be judged on their content– not so much on the literary abilities. It’s the story, not the telling! While every story submitted is a ‘winning story’, 2 will be selected as the ‘winners’ of the Cross Country Challenge.

Winners will receive a copy of **How Healthy is My Job? Tools for Self-Assessment**. This is a self-scoring questionnaire developed by Martin Shain and based on the Neighbour @ Work philosophy - the winners are encouraged to use it in their workplace.

### **The Neighbour@Work Sample Story**

My story goes back more than one year but is something I wish to tell. At the time, I was providing Health Promotion consulting to Women’s College Hospital in Toronto. One day while at work, I received a call from my sister who lived in Calgary, saying that she had just received confirmation of a diagnosis of cancer. In the days and weeks that followed, I found a bottomless well of support from my coworkers, my manager and the unit as a whole. People around me were very understanding as I flew back and forth between the two cities to assist my sister – a single parent with two young daughters. We lost the battle to cancer but were able to maintain our wholeness as a family. The hospital granted me as much time as needed – full emotional and salaried support (remember I wasn’t an employee but was a contractor, and never was I penalized for being by my sister’s side). I later returned to work and completed my project – which won the Commonwealth Secretariat Award for Innovation. I feel a great deal of loyalty to Women’s College Hospital; they contributed to smoothing out an aspect of my life while the rest was in chaos.

From Geri in Toronto, Ontario