

NEW HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

If you've just settled in your new home now is the time to take advantage of the holiday season to welcome and introduce yourself to your neighbours and community. Get to know those on your street – it's great when your best friend can hop across the street to share a relaxing glass of wine with you after work. Even if you are not looking for an extended family, these are the people you will come to count on for not just a cup of sugar but they could be the ones coming to your rescue should there ever be an emergency.

OPEN THE HOUSE - HOLIDAY STYLE

Everywhere you look there are tips on throwing a great party. This is a great way to meet everyone especially if you've moved in from out of town. Draft up a simple invitation and take a stroll to pop them in mailboxes. At the party, have a guest book out but included headings like 'house number' so you will remember who lives in which house. If you would like to serve hot apple cider and coffees hold it in the afternoon from 1-3pm. However if spiked eggnog suits your style better, have it later like 7-9pm in the evening or don't have an ending time at all!

SWAP SOME SWEETS

Hold a cookie exchange at your home. Same idea, stick invitations in mailboxes and ask participants to bring at least 3 dozen of their favourite holiday square or cookie. Ask guests to bake their cookies two days before the party – day old or more cookies are easier to transport and this way there won't be any excuses that their cookies weren't ready in time. Pick up colorful cookie tins at the dollar store for guests to pack up their selection once divided up. For fun, have un-iced gingerbread cut-out cookies out with decorations available so the Martha's can play during the party.

GIVE THE GIFT OF TIME

Get active in your new community by giving your time to the less fortunate. Ask your local Chamber of Commerce or Welcome Wagon what local charities could use extra help this season. Check local newspapers as charities often advertise during this busy season. This is a great time to get your children involved and teach them about giving back to someone in need.

Moving into a new community is a huge undertaking but it is important not to overlook what your community has to offer. Making friends and connections is not always easy so you might have to make it happen for yourself. Everyone is very busy this time of year so even choose just one way to mix and mingle with your new neighbours. Even the Ontario Government has Ontario's Good Neighbours campaign that encourages each of us to reach out and help others in our neighbourhood. After all, love thy neighbour everyday, not just during the holidays.