An Investigation of Public Play to shape Urban Spaces

By

Laura Fyles

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Principal Advisor: Jeremy Bowes

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## <u>Abstract</u>

The neighbourhoods, which create the very fabric of cities, are incomprehensibly changing by forces far out of the control of many residents. The vital connections to their communities, which can ensure a sustainable vitality across generations, are being broken by the effects of intensification, and by the ebb-and-flow of resident migration and commercial development. Our children can renew our connections to our cities, first by getting to know their own neighbourhoods, then by reaching out to fellow communities across the city. By offering our children a mechanism to explore how their urban environs are changing, they themselves can become experts on their local community with a genuine voice.

The cultural importance of storytelling and play are finding their way back as rediscovered learning tools. Legends, myths, campfire lore, secrets between friends – these are the stories which leave their greatest impact on how we understand our ever-changing world, and how we begin to see our place in it. This research seeks ways to engage our young citizens to weigh alternate urban visions and to share their understandings through shared stories found in urban play – explore its sidewalks, buildings, walls, trees and people, and then share, in their own way, a collective voice of guidance.

(Image 01 Junior Jane's Walk 2012)

## Introduction

Play: it is an integrating mechanism, which brings together everything we learn, know,

feel, and understand[1].

Public spaces in urban environments have long been the center of our human condition and connectivity. The richness and health of our cities are influenced directly by our support of our urban communities; it is from these spaces that we bring together the stories of our future forged from the trappings of our past.[2]

> "By reclaiming urban spaces to create community-oriented places, we plant
>
> the seeds for greater neighbourhood communication, empower
>
> communities, and nurture local culture."[3]

If neighbourhoods (meaning people and the spaces they inhabit) are uniquely defined by their stories and active participation within public spaces, then the most successful projects – both financially and civically – would dovetail with that local lore. The local lore would embrace the life of these public spaces as unique definers of the community.

This report is inspired by and initially based upon research collected from the Jane's Walk Jr. 2012 and a cross analysis of similar community engagement programs through North America, UK, and Australia. This walk guides participants (ages 5 – 11) through a program of play-based exploration among the building places of our urban core collecting the stories built out of the exploration. The Jane's Walk honours the legacy and ideas of urban activist and writer Jane Jacobs who championed the interests of local residents

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[1] Herrington, S., Lesmeister, C.,Nicholls, J. & Stefiuk, K. (2007). An informational guide to young children's outdoor play spaces 7Cs. *West coast Child Care Resource Centre & Consortium for Health, Intervention, Learning and Development (CHILD*

[2] Sanford, R. (2008) The Weekender Effect, Hyperdevelopment in Mountain Towns.

[3] http://cityrepair.org/how-to/placemaking/

and pedestrians about a human centric approach to planning. These walks help knit people together

through a common experience into a strong and resourceful community.[4]

*Can an exploratory walk foster an awareness of urbanism in young people through*

*play-based exploration of their urban spaces creating a sense of belonging and*

*building stories of connection?*

*"Adopting a play ethic opens new doors, invites us to re-invigorate our*

*thinking, and opens up new spaces for regenerating ideas." [5]*
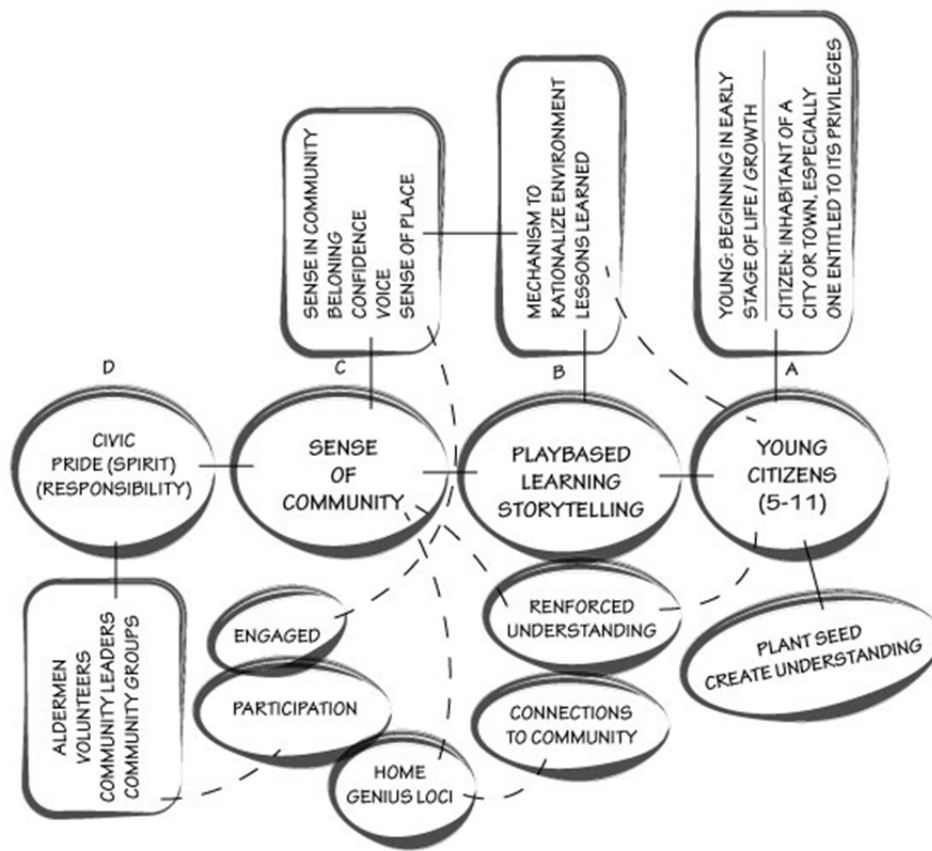


(Figure 01 Research question system map)

[4] http://www.janeswalk.net/

[5] Sarkissian.W., Hurford. D., Wenman. C., (2010). Creative Community Planning Transformative Engagement Methods for Working at the Edge. *Toronto, ON: UTP Distribution pp. 21-23*

## Jane Jacobs:

### *Understanding Her Impact on Urban Community Development*

Jane Jacobs, a journalist not formally trained as an urban planner, was able to look at cities from a different perspective seeing how they were working or not working at the community level. Mrs. Jacobs believed strongly in looking at the past and present activities of a community; in such analysis would form the best model to build strong cities with prosperous economics. She believed that this historical understanding of community offered city planners a holistic understanding of the needs, strengths, and weaknesses of a particular community. She urged people to remember what it was like to be part of a neighbourhood. She humanized urban planning.[6] Mrs. Jacob's growing understanding of the city and its economic systems, together with her numerous accomplishments, have largely shaped the discussion which now leads urban design practice in many North American metropolises. It is in this specific aspect of her learning's - the grass roots appeal to a city's own resident to learn more about the place they live and work. While discussing the contemporary urban planning practices which have shaped these places – that are the foundations of both Jane's Walk, and the founding principles of this research with respect to furthering these discussions with school-aged children (ages 5-11).

Jane's Walk "helps knit people together into a strong and resourceful community, instilling belonging, and encouraging civic leadership." [7] Through their own keen, detective observations, is there more to be learned about our communities through the unfiltered perspectives of our kids? This research looks at ways to extend these participatory activities as essential lessons into the everyday experience of our children, in a way that urban issues are a part of everyday awareness.

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[6] Ford. H. (2011). The Life and Philosophy of Jane Jacobs.
[7] *http://www.janeswalk.net/*

***A Brief History of Jane's Walk, and Its Connection to Toronto***

In April 2006, Jane Jacobs passed away. In her honour, her friends and colleagues believed there needed to be a way to continue her work, and to continue spreading her knowledge to neighbourhoods far and wide. Coinciding with the celebration of her birthday in the first week of May, Jane's Walk was created as an annual event to re-introduce residents to their cities:

> *Past walks have explored a wide range of urban landscapes, from social housing slated for redevelopment to areas with a rich architectural and cultural heritage, to teen hangouts and secret gardens. Walks are led by individuals and small groups. Some are focused around historical themes more than geographical areas; some strolls have been built around ideas like the urban forestry, gay and lesbian history, places of relevance to the homeless, the history of 'skid row', and urgent planning matters facing certain neighbourhood. The walks offer a more personal take on local culture and issues. They are not a tourist driven initiative but an insider tour of a neighbourhood that helps open up a friendly, engaged discussion amongst interested participants.* [8]

The purpose or intent of the Jane's Walk is a series of free neighbourhood walking tours that help put people in touch with their environment and with each other, by bridging social and geographic gaps and creating a space for city inhabitants to discover themselves. Therefore, in the spirit of Jane Jacobs, these walks are to encourage citizens to 'get out and walk', to talk about their neighbourhood, and to get to know their neighbours.[9]

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[8] http://www.janeswalk.net/
[9] http://www.janeswalk.net/

***Jane's Walk Junior – The Beginning***

The notion that Mrs. Jacobs' ideas could be as elementary to our children's education as the ABC's, was brought out of the classroom, and introduced to the city as a Jane's Walk for children in 2010. Held on Gladstone Avenue in Toronto, fifty children were armed with clipboards, offered a pair of plate-sized rimmed glasses (a la Jane Jacobs), and were led through their Dufferin Grove neighbourhood. Taking notes and collecting the 'stuff' they could collect, these fifty children and their families began to notice things they have never noticed about their neighbourhood. As they walked, these children were able to share this data, and share how these things mattered to them.

This walk offered each child an early opportunity to start a process of urban observation. More importantly, this walk introduced the value of talking about their neighbourhood and, at a smaller scale, their city. However, this walk did not have a process of recording the families' adventures. These lessons imparted upon the participant children and their families were essentially lost as one of many exciting weekends in the life of active children. Without a process of documenting these stories 'written' by the children themselves, the unfiltered wisdom therein – as a snapshot of a moment and condition of a time – we lose the ability to share and reflect upon them. As will be explored further, it is in this sharing and reflection where we can find important knowledge.

In June 2011, Kirkor Architects and Planners lead the second walk for children, dubbed "Jane's Walk Junior". Leading children and their families through the districts of Old Toronto to the financial towers of Bay Street, this walk introduced children and their families to the 'wall' of buildings, which create the Toronto downtown core. The intention was not to explore children's reaction to the monumental buildings of downtown, but to understand if they could find a spirit of play, adventure, and exploration in the public squares, both interior and exterior, which permeate these downtown areas. Was there a place for children to be just children? Outfitted with an expanded kit of observational tools developed

specifically for enhancing a child's participation in the walk, the kit enabled the walk animators a way to record what the children were seeing, building upon these ideas with their families. This allowed the animators to immediately sit and share these records with their fellow participants.

Hearing how they recalled their walks and the stories, they shared both with their adult handlers and with their fellow children walkers. The post walk interviews with the children participants began to describe an imprint of urban curiosity. Just as important, the children and their families expressed the hope that there would be the opportunity for another walk. It was clear from the observation of this walk that in only ninety minutes, a choreographed program of exploration quickly lead to the creation of new perspectives, and the kit provided a greater medium to share. Although the concept of recording the children's observations were enhanced, these too were ultimately lost as there were no higher platforms of recording these observations considered.



(Image 02 Junior Jane's Walk 2012)

## Connection to a Sense of Community:

### *Community Spirit*

Public spaces in urban environments have long been the center of our human condition and connectivity. With the constant growth of our cities, changes in people's lifestyles and the development of technical advances, little significance is placed on a physical connection to community spirit.

With this, people are suffering from a sense of placelessness.[10] Community spirit is the culmination of the inhabitants, the places, the spaces, and the stories as grown over time. The development and preservation of community spirit is important to the quality of environment as well as the integrity of human life.[11] Investigating this sense of spirit, and seeking to find an engagement mechanism for young citizens is the foundation of this research.

Without community spirit, a lack of roots manifests, that is, a spiritual emptiness.[12]



(Image 03 Urban Residence in Toronto's Core)

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[10] Sanford, R. (2008) The Weekender Effect, Hyperdevelopment in Mountain Towns. Rocky Mountain Books. ISBN 978-1-897522-10-3

[11] Najafi, M., Shariff, M. (2011) The Concept of Place and Sense of Place in Architectural Studies. *International Journal of Human and Social Sciences 6:3 2011*

[12] Norberg-Schultz, C. (1979) Genius Loci Towards a phenomenology of Architecture. Rizzoli ISBN: 0847802876. The Concept of Place pgs. 27- 38

***Ideation of Young Citizen Engagement in Communities***

Current levels of population growth and urban migration, global migration/immigration, and a hasty need to accommodate the pressures created by both, are leaving our children further and further out of the discussions about what make our cities great. From the many concurrent urban-awareness programs growing throughout the world, to countless recent publications, it is clear that there is an emerging discussion which recognizes an imminent need to engage our young citizens and to add their voices to our needs for community building[13]. (Refer to Appendix C) By offering our children a mechanism to learn about these changes, helping them to understanding their place within their community would be one way to ensure they are armed with the knowledge to manage and engage these shifts in the landscape of their growing city[14].

The United Nations report on urbanization cites that an estimated 180,000 people are moving into urban centers every year, higher than at any time in our history as humankind[15][16][17]. This exodus from the country into the city is pressing what were once familiar, close-knit neighbourhoods into dense urban constructs with little connectivity between either residents or the streets they now walk. Many neighbourhoods are in a constant state of change, as demographics shift with the introduction of new families seeking – ironically enough – stable neighbourhoods in which to raise their families. In this stress, residents are increasingly turning inward as a way of managing their own day-to-day pressures, ignoring – or at least becoming apathetic to – the changes in their neighbourhoods and cities. [3][4][18][19]

[13] Ragan, D. (2006) The world urban forum 2006, Vancouver Working Group discussion paper; The Youth Friendly City. *The Environmental Youth Alliance.*

[14] Murray, S. (2012). Urban living: disenfranchised youth has role to play in improving cities.

[15] http://www.nationalgeographic.com/earthpulse/population.html

[16] http://esa.un.org/unup/

[17] http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW

[18] UNICEF The State of the world's children, Children in an urban world

[19] Menard. M. (2010) Youth Civic Engagement. *Social Affairs Division Parliamentary Information and Research Services Publication No. 2010-23-E*

Toronto's population has grown over 21% within a five-year period, and the GTA population is expected to reach nearly 7.5 million by 2031. It is expected that the City will begin to show signs of strain under the myriad of demands placed upon the region by an increasingly diverse population, whether this is in the ability to provide adequate services such as public schooling, public transportation, even water, sanitation, and electricity. Already, the current demands of immediate growth (i.e. the downtown condominium tower boom) are being felt throughout the GTA. However, and more importantly to the discussion of this research, this strain should be understood as it applies to the care, quality, and foresight in the design applied to our streets, parks, and accessible public spaces. These spaces, critical to our collective quality of life as urban dwellers, are just as quickly being overcome with rushed planning in the light of intensification demands.

This urban shift is changing Toronto into a denser, more diverse playground, whereby the idea of an urban childhood is increasingly becoming the norm. Children, aged five to nine, account for over 18% of Toronto's population with an expected annual increase of 2% until 2031[20], many of whom come from families with parents born outside of Canada (62%)[21]. Perspectives of urban living will vary greatly between families of different diversities, and this will directly correlate as to how children begin to understand their cities.

Recalling Article 12 of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), children need to believe they have a genuine voice in their community, as they themselves are experts on their local community, representing a powerful resource for creating healthy, future communities[22]. Fostering a way for our children to become young citizens through heightened urban awareness can strengthen the communities in which they play. The growing number of programs developed to expand a child's urban awareness is a

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[20] *Toronto Report Card of children. http://www.toronto.ca/reportcardonchildren/*
[21] *Toronto Report Card of children. http://www.toronto.ca/reportcardonchildren/*
[22] *Blanchet-Cohen, N., Cook, P. (2006) Growing up in Cities Canada, Creative Tools: Civic Engagement of young people. International Institute for child rights and development*

clear sign that there is a value to this belief, and more importantly, there are immediate results within their communities. American researchers Youniss and Yates found that engaged young citizens were more likely to meet personal and social challenges and to control their own lives; enjoyed higher self-esteem and a more acute sense of their abilities. They have defined these five abilities as follows:

- A general improvement in social and school, university skills
- Greater self-confidence
- Reinforced ties with family and peers
- Reinforced moral values and integrity
- Compassion for others[23]

These skills can engage young citizens in a greater understanding of their community; and grow with them as they mature within the flexible nature of their urban environment.

For example, in Toronto and the GTA, the majority of these programs are targeted to communities experiencing difficulties with crime and violence, gangs, youth disenfranchisement, school dropout, etc; essentially understood as high-risk neighbourhoods.[24] The focus within these communities seems to be two-fold: they are in need of alternative ways to improve youth participation directly in the well-being of their neighbourhoods; and, as a resulting, a beneficial change of focus from the challenges of their neighbourhood. [25] The use of play-based exploration and narrative storytelling is a creative practice that, at an early age, can have a long-term impact on young citizens. Working with them at their knowledge level builds a trust network, which is crucial. Play is an easy way to break the ice; play is fluid. Building design thinking early through play-based exploration, and sharing one's learning's through narrative storytelling can create better problem solvers through understanding and empathy. (Zahra Ebrahim – Principal, Partner, Founder of architext inc.)

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[23] Menard. M. (2010) Youth Civic Engagement. *Social Affairs Division Parliamentary Information and Research Services Publication No. 2010-23-E*
[24] Toronto playworks, generationOn, groundworks
[25] East Scarborough Storefront project.

*"Urban space is their first step out of their home. Growing a healthy city through nurturing our children's minds, like flowers in the garden. You need good fertile soil to ensure a strong flower grows to a bright healthy addition into the entire garden."* (Aziz Dhamani, Kirkor Architects & Planners)



(Image 04 Urban Youth Community Art)

## Exploratory Play and Storytelling:

### *Play-Based Exploration*

Exploratory play is one of the many ways children learn about their environment and the world around them. For the purpose of this discussion, exploratory play will be defined as the exploration of one's environment through play-based learning. This broad definition acknowledges that there are many ways, which children play to learn and develop social skills.[26]
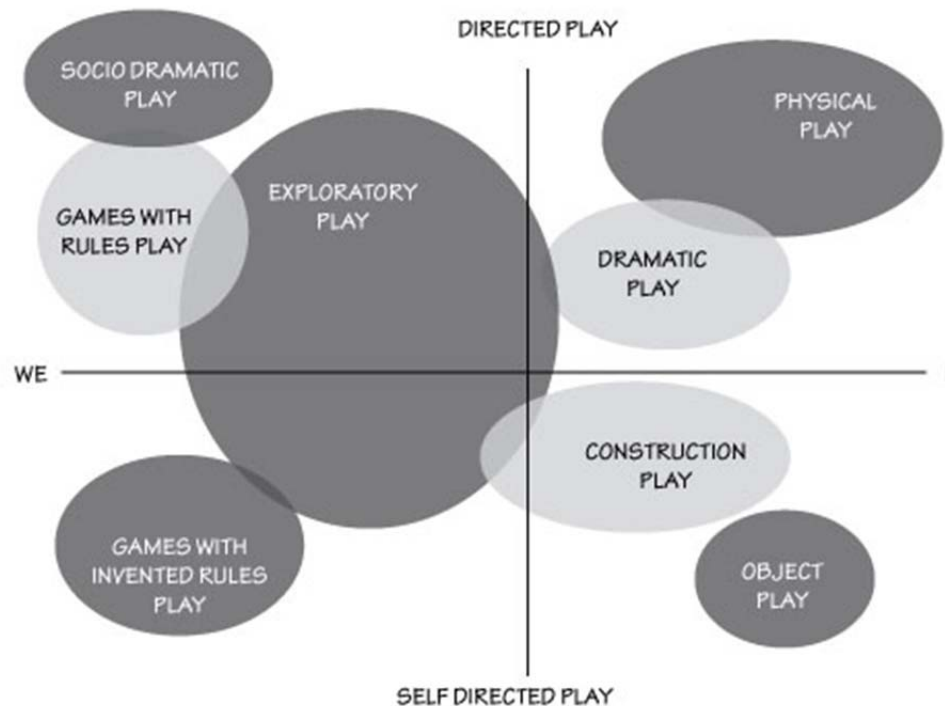


(Figure 02 Quadrant play analysis)

The above diagram breaks down the variety of play methods, which have been described in research as play-based development of self-identity and social context.[27] Each different type of play serves a different purpose in the development of a child's understanding of themselves and their place within the world.

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[26] Hewes, J. (2007) Let the Children Play: Nature's answer to Early Learning. *Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre. Canadian Council on Learning.*

[27] Hewes, J. (2007) Let the Children Play: Nature's answer to Early Learning. *Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre. Canadian Council on Learning.*

Exploratory play is the activity in which children learn to explore and build their sense of understanding around them. It is learning by doing, constructing knowledge for themselves in interaction with the physical world and with peers.[28]

Play, in the most general sense, has shown in many studies that it is innate in us as humans and considered the primary vehicle for children's education throughout most of human history.[29] It evokes imagination, creativity, originality and innovation; play is what you feel when you are at your most free, your most voluntary. It is a way that we reflect our sense of self out to the world, becoming aware of how we see ourselves and how others may see us. Play equals learning in children; as Pat Kane succinctly describes, *"I play, therefore I am".[30]*

Great philosophers knew play as an experience of being an action, creative and fully autonomous.[31] It generates an ethic of confidence to be spontaneous, creative, and empathic across every area of life – relationships, community, and culture. It is a way that children learn to explore social norms, and how to solve problems with peers without parent interventions. It is central to emotional development, providing catharsis for children's fears, opportunities to process negative experiences, and teaches self-regulation.[32]

With industrialization came the emphasis on work and productivity and the value of play within our culture declined, viewed as frivolous. Elkind (2012)[33] argues that we need to rethink our ideas of play and learning. Psychologists define learning as "the modification of behavior as the result of experience". If you

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[28] Hewes, J. (2007) Let the Children Play: Nature's answer to Early Learning. *Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre. Canadian Council on Learning.*
[29] Gray, P. (2009). Empowering Neighbourhoods and restoring play: a modest proposal. *Psychology Today* (http://www/psychologytoday.com) *October 7, 2009 – 7:37am*
[30] Kane, P. (2000) Play for today. *The Observer*
[31] Elkind, D. (2012) Learning through play. Community playthings.
[32] Miller, D., Tichota, K., White, J. (2009) Young Children learn through authentic play in a nature explore classroom: a white paper based on research conducted at Dimensions Early education programs in Lincoln, NE.
[33] Elkind, D. (2012) Learning through play. Community playthings.

look at play as a way children learn then the definition of play would be "the modification of experience as the result of behavior".

Play-based exploration encourages children to explore the spaces around them, to create a sense of understanding and confidence; this creates a sense of connection to place and a sense of self. [34] Since young children are in the process of building memories that will contribute to their sense of place, play-based exploration and discovery enriches their understanding of community and place. With play described as a natural way that children learn about their world it seems to follow that it would be a way to explore a larger portion of their environment and connect them to their surrounding community.

*Storytelling*

Storytelling is also a natural vehicle that we as humans have used throughout history, as a means of passing on our collective history; it is as if we are hard-wired to receive information in this form[35]. Storytelling will be defined here as the combinations of real and imagined events that connect in such a way to provide a chain of events that are recounted to others. This broad definition acknowledges there are many ways by which storytelling is expressed and communicated to children and others alike.

Over the last several decades, psychologists have undertaken comprehensive studies to explore how the telling of stories affects our minds. Results repeatedly show that our attitudes, fears, hopes, and values are strongly influenced by stories.[36] When we are absorbed, in a story, we drop our intellectual guard and we are moved emotionally. We have the ability to transcend ourselves into a story and connect with a character, place, and time. Through this connection, we are able to create visual cues based on the

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[34] MacDonald-Carlson, H. (2003) Developing a sense of place: Exploring ideas of Home and Community. *Canadian Children Child Study*

[35] Gottschall, J. (2012) The Storytelling Animal, How stories make us human. *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. New York, New York. ISBN 978-0-547-39140-3*

[36] Gottschall, J. (2012) The Storytelling Animal, How stories make us human. *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. New York, New York. ISBN 978-0-547-39140-3*

storyteller's techniques, helping us learn from the message that is wrapped within their narrative. This is possibly, why folklore, fairy tales, and old wives tales have helped to shape our cultures.[37] [38] Stories are a way to communicate and translate values and attitudes that would be hard or impossible to achieve by other methods; it has been our way to share ideas from generation to generation and across cultures.

Stories allow for ambiguity and representation of the unknown, they allow the listener to escape established roles and look beyond their current frame of mind. They have the ability to focus people's attention onto a specific topic, opening it for a safe exploration of new concepts that can be tested against the story, allowing the listener to take in the story. Understanding the narrative lets the listeners explore the idea mentally. Using stories as an innovative way to focus people's initiatives can build and shapes common goals.[39]

Storytelling is a natural communication method that children use instinctively to express and test their ideas with their peers and adult companions about their lives and how they see their world. This makes narrative storytelling an organic, natural process to synthesize information and connect them with their surrounding community. Building on their stories or stories they have heard about their community can build their community spirit.[40] [41]

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[37] Zipes, J. (2012) The irresistible fairy tale, The cultural and social history of a genre
[38] Payne, M., Barbera,J. (2010) A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory, 2nd Edition
[39] Gottschall, J. (2012) The Storytelling Animal, How stories make us human. *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. New York, New York. ISBN 978-0-547-39140-3*
[40] Richards, A. (2012) The Story is just the start. *Early Childhood News – Article reading Centre*
[41] Coskie, T., Trudel, H., Vohs, R. (2010) Creating Community through storytelling.

## Storytelling and Play as Urban Educator:

### *Towards an Urban Innovation*

The engagement of play-based exploration and storytelling is the founding principle in the development of this urban awareness innovation to foster a lasting connection between children and their urban communities. Using a semi-directed urban exploration walk as the stage to set children into their city, the higher purpose of this project is to leave children free to explore the nooks and crannies of some select neighbourhoods of their city (within all measures of safety) to see if they do in fact find stories of their own. Will the children, both with their families and among one another, connect with found artifacts, urban objects (signs, street furniture), and buildings (or parts thereof) to create their own way of seeing the city? Will landmarks, familiar to mom and dad, be more important than a tree or sculpture to a child? Will they find their own stories to be as vivid as those histories of the space introduced to them by their walk animators? How can a sense of history make the stories more relevant to be shared with other children? The intention is to foster an indelible urban awareness within our children.

The purpose of this research is not to prove the need for – or the value of – involving children directly in the shaping of their own neighbourhoods:  the need for this has been addressed by many across the world as essential, at many levels, to our growing urbanized world. With more youth, living within our dense urban spaces there is a need to engage children and youth in urban understandings.[42] The purpose of this research is to develop a unique innovation, which can be a tool to help children describe their environment and share it with others (refer to Appendix A). This innovation is to be specifically developed for children (ages 5-11), purposed to be easily embraced by them as something that is for them and them alone. It is at this age where biases are yet to be formed, conceptions made firm, and imagination is not just limitless, but unfiltered. Much like the plastic pirate sword, the children enjoying this innovation must

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[42] *Blanchet-Cohen, N., Cook, P. (2006) Growing up in Cities Canada, Creative Tools: Civic Engagement of young people. International Institute for child rights and development*

be able to project into this tool a sense of play and adventure, to draw out the stories of our city which can tell us all a little more about the good and bad of our neighbourhoods. This innovation must be one that children can return to repeatedly when things about their city and communities need questioning, in a way that only they can.

In exciting the mind of a child, the idea of unravelling of a mystery to lead to new revelations about one's neighbourhood is important discoveries, and an important aspect of exploration. Children are quick and excited to share these discoveries because they matter, if not immediately to the child then to someone else. Either it impinges upon the child's sense of right and wrong, or it is a reaffirmation of something well and good. The action of sharing these discoveries is the stories we are seeking to inspire. It is in these stories that are found the sometimes obvious, if not overt lessons, to be gleaned about our communities simply because children most often just tell-it-like-it-is when given the opportunity. There is also wisdom to be found in the collection of stories about a common place, underlying threads tying all together in common themes, speaking of a common condition. More telling, though, is where these stories may lead: is there a message of excitement and happiness foretelling of greater expectations; or is there a more reticent narrative, unsure of what lies ahead. When applied to our neighbourhoods, these stories can speak with immediacy to their health and vitality.

The facilitation of play-based exploration and storytelling, towards expanding an urban awareness in our children, is the guiding principle of this innovation, but it alone is not the innovation. The unique success of this innovation is found as part of an urban "triptych" whereby the following questions are answered:

Part 1: Play-based, urban exploration drives the creation of urban stories – how can this innovation enable storytelling?

Part 2: How can this innovation document these stories? And,

Part 3: How are these stories collected and shared in a dynamic environment whereby they can be built upon and learned from?

## Towards a Learning Innovation and Urban Strategy – Part 1

### *Settings for Discovery – Current Programs using Play-Based learning and Storytelling*

There are many community engagement and urban exploration programs operating under similar philosophies within Canada, USA, UK, and Australia. All operate with the same over-arching premise that there is a distinct need to create, develop, and foster an acute awareness in citizens young and old to the changing needs of their urban communities. It is evident that most of these organizations started at a time of turmoil in their community or city, and these programs are in a direct response to not only starting a process of reparations and healing, but also an educational legacy, which can help to stem these troubles in the future. As described in more detail in Appendix D, these organizations are open to discuss the successes and challenges of their current undertakings, but all are clear about one specific ideal: their work is vital and needs to continue; and work of this nature needs to be tailored specifically for each community.

Two organizations, TVO Givers and Urban Code Makers, have built successfully upon the theoretical premise of this research towards strengthening urban connections vis-à-vis play-based exploration and storytelling. Urban Code Makers' focus is about building an urban connection through play-based exploration within a sector of their city. TVO Giver is about children taking control of an unsafe area, within their neighbourhood, and through their ideas and envisioning with their peers, creates a safe place for all to play, share, and enjoy. Both of these programs look at ways to connect through play learning, building stories of their adventures creating a connection with community spirit.

Engaging young citizens with an understanding of their community at their natural level of learning plays a positive role in their lives and in the places, they work to effect a change. Connecting to a place is not an immediate perception, but is one built over time through those experiences that one has in and around their places. Stories function as a tie and attachment to the community, which is the emotion and feeling

that we have for a place. [43] Building this early understanding in young citizens creates a greater awareness of the urban community where they reside.

It is not the intention here to track or follow the long-term effects of these projects, though it would be interesting to see the long-term impact of their work and hear about the long-lasting outlook impressed upon the participants. It is only through speculation, literature reviews, and cross analysis through similar research that indicate programs will have a beneficial impact on the participants staying active within their community or city as they and their community mature with the future changes. The importance of these programs to this urban learning strategy is that each poses specific questions and/or challenges to their participants about issues affecting their cities. It is simply in this structured questioning that the participating children set a stage for deeper exploration; which must exist within the proposed innovation tools that will be used to challenge urban issues.

As common as it is for a student to take a pencil into class, this innovation seeks to be an integral tool carried into any of these exploratory programs. The innovation tools presented as part of this strategy are to work hand-in-glove with these programs, working to heighten the awareness of the participants learning within these unique urban engagements. There are deeper stories to be found in all of these activities, which may not be a part of the intended 'curriculum', but if explored, and ideally shared with their peers, can lead to a more complex narrative with richer insights.

It should be clear that these programs – Jane's Walk, Groundwork, generationOn, etc. – are by no means the exclusive settings within which to use these tools. An important element of this innovation is in its ability to reach out to those local community leaders and youth mentors who recognize in their own communities successes upon which to build, or challenge, that must be confronted, but are unclear how

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[43] Najafi, M., Shariff, M. (2011) The Concept of Place and Sense of Place in Architectural Studies. *International Journal of Human and Social Sciences 6:3 2011*

to start. The intended innovation of this strategy works to offer a set of investigative departures and tools for children to see their neighbourhoods and city communities differently. These departures are intended to challenge how children see and experience their urban environs, reaching for personal impressions and exploring more deep-seated feelings that are less filtered and guarded in children. These experiences, when documented through the unique selection of tools provided for the children, will not just record the rapidly developing stories the children are keen to create, but provide the framework within which they may share with those around them.

The tools of this innovation can create that first setting for our children to set out, or can complement existing urban awareness programs. The need for a setting – a platform – with which these tools are used, is critical to bring out successful insights from the child participants. It is a way of switching on exploratory play.



(Image 05 Jane's Walk Junior 2012)

*Lessons from Jane's Walk Jr. 2012:  What Connections Are Successful with Young Citizens*

The discussion about play and exploring their community seemed to be a logical connection for the young participants of Jane's Walk Junior 2012. As long as they were happy and enjoying their walk, it was play-based exploration, for it was fun and fun is play. It was interesting to hear that they did not separate these activities as adults do. Play-based exploration and building stories around the exploration is a natural method of connection. This connection builds confidence and self-assurance of themselves, adding this knowledge to their repertoire for the next exploration. Discussed in both the "Youth Friendly City Report" and "Towards Cities Fit for Children", the health and prosperity of a future city is influenced by the social, educational and engagement of its younger citizens.[44] It is therefore important to consider the need to ensure that there are opportunities within communities to engage, connect, and build self-awareness for young citizens; helping them to understand that they are a vital piece within the big puzzle of the city's future.

The children that participated on the walk and in the subsequent interviews were between the ages of five to eleven. The findings (as described in Appendix A) clearly indicated that five to seven might be too young to understand what their connection can be within their community. This is not to mean that children of this age should be excluded from the conversation or the opportunity for urban exploration and adventure. Because of their naïve outlook on life outside their door, they offer a non-jaded perception to the conversation. Children eight to eleven seem to be exposed enough and given some independence within their community to have built an understanding on what their community is and what is needed from their perception. They were eager and keen to offer advice on areas of improvement for future exploration walks and community improvements.

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[44] Ragan, D. (2006) The world urban forum 2006, Vancouver Working Group discussion paper; The Youth Friendly City. *The Environmental Youth Alliance.*

It is important that there are future opportunities to engage this age group into the discussion within their communities and provide outlets for them to see that they have a place and voice to make real change within their communities and city at large.
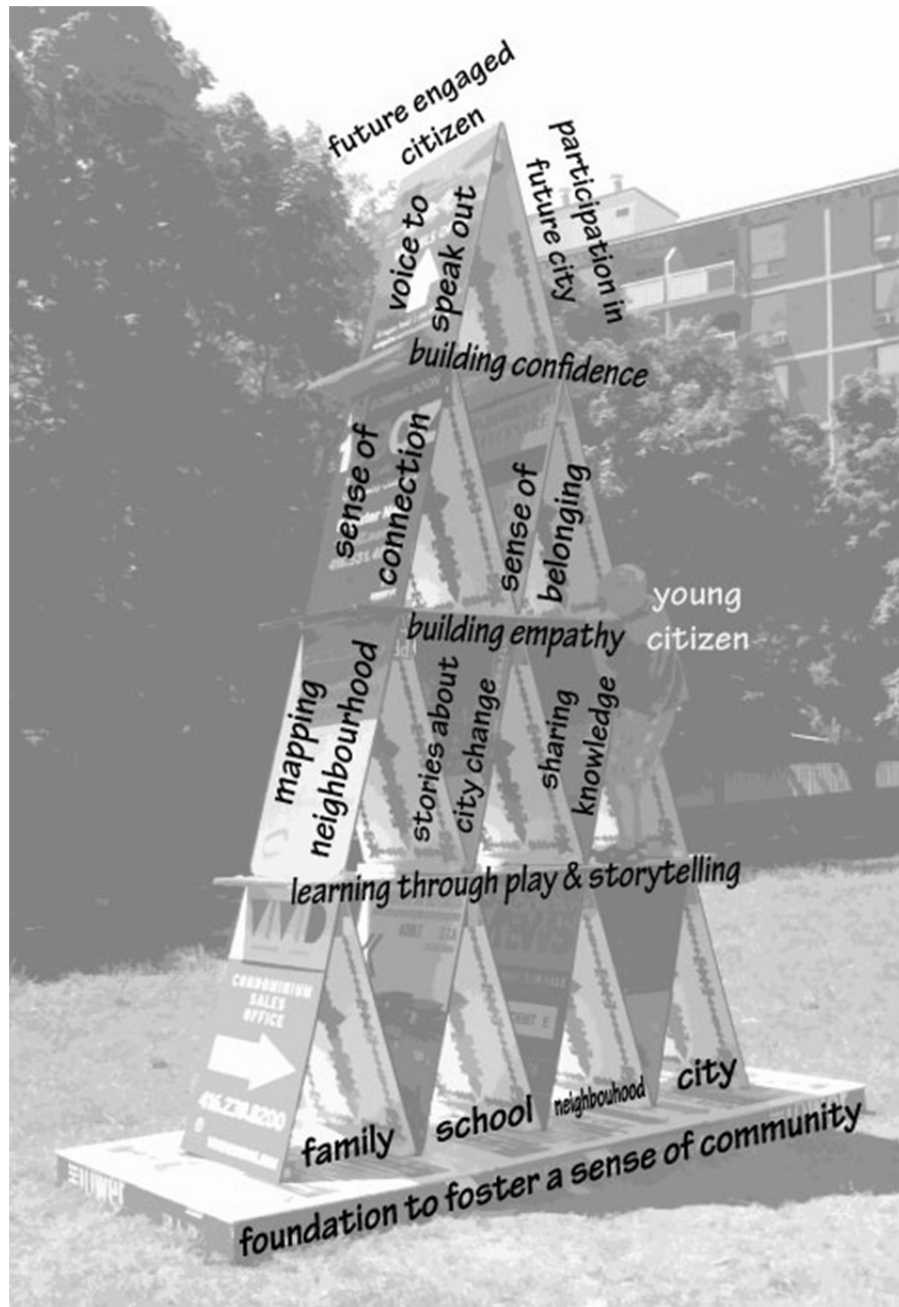
(Figure 03: Youth Engagement Triangle)

## Towards a Learning Innovation and Urban Strategy – Part 2

### *Junior Urban Explorer Kit*

In the belief that our children are truly young citizens, that they themselves are experts to their local community, we need find a way to hear what they are saying to us about our cities. A strategy must be invoked to make our children fully aware of their own perceptions of our urban environment, to realize the power they represent as agents of change with respect to our urban environments. To explore a collective voice in sharing their own stories about the places in which they play. How can we inspire children to tell and share stories about their neighbourhoods?

Reflecting on the initial walk, the subsequent interviews, and supporting research publications, the best way to foster, connect and engage our young citizens is by giving them opportunities which are easily accessible, fun, and can be done with family, peers and companions. Offering children the tools with which to build their ideas, will take them inside or outside of a structured learning environment. To provide this first tool to frame the child's thinking is to bring his/her focus to see things primarily about 'neighbourhood'.

As just discussed, structured urban awareness programs (such as Jane's Walk) are merely settings within which to set imagination at play,  but the first part of this innovation project is the creation of a Junior Urban Explorer Kit. This kit is an observation kit, similar in nature to a child's bug collection kit or a naturalist's field kit, the tools therein are specifically geared at unraveling the urban stories children will find in the spaces they come upon. In their walking adventures with their family, friends, school chums, and the like, children can use this kit to build stories around what they see, touch, jump on, and off, even smell. In their play, and armed with these tools, it is believed that children's eyes can be immediately opened to their city as something to be seen and talked about, not just lived in. This is the exact result noted during the Junior Jane's Walk, and represents the early awakening of urban issues to our children.

(Image 06: Junior Explorer Kit, prototype)

The **Junior Urban Explorer Kit** (referred also as the "Kit") is designed for children, ages 5 to 11, as accompanied by their older 'handlers'. Whether this is family, friends, or a leader(s) in their life, the sharing of a walk by both junior and senior urban explorers is critical to the success of these efforts. Children will quickly recognize that if the effort of the exploration is important to parents or guardians, and as reinforced by the presentation of a tool to engage the child, the idea will become important to the child. If an adult takes the time to tell a story to a child, engaging him/her directly and uniquely, it is very likely the child will not only remember the story, but remember every detail about how it was told, how it made them feel, and want to pass it on.[45]

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[45] Payne, M., Barbera,J. (2010) A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory

The Kit is a compilation of tools used to aid children's observations, focusing their view and recording their stories. The idea of the Junior Urban Explore Kit, is the result of observations based on the initial walk`s loot bags developed for Kirkor Architects as it applied to what children may want to use during their walk. The final explorer kit, presented as part of this research, is the refinement of these tools building on the suggestions offered by the children interviewed after their Jane's Walk Junior. Each Kit will be made up of the following tools:

| 1, classic yellow HB pencil | Variety of Small Stickers* | 1, Small Magnifying Glass and Compass* |
| 4, coloured ink pens * | 1, Set of 15 Postcards* | 1, wide-rimmed play glasses |
| 1, pencil sharpener and eraser | 3, Small Sticks of Coloured Chalk* | 1, Reference guide* |
| 1, Black, felt-tipped pen | 2, Large 'Googly' Eyes, self-adhering | 1, Small Clipboard* |
| 1, small coiled notepad* | 4, fabric ribbons* | 1, Canvas explorer bag* |

*Items identified with an asterisk (*) are additions and/or modifications to the original Kirkor prototype, based on interview feed-back*

Each of these tools is explained in extensive detail in Appendix C, the purpose and rationale behind each succinctly described. However, the essential reasoning behind each element is rooted in one of the three questions of this innovation:

Part 1:     Play-based, urban exploration drives the creation of urban stories – how can this innovation enable storytelling?

Part 2:     How can this innovation document these stories? And,

Part 3:     How are these stories collected and shared in a dynamic environment whereby they can be built upon and learned from?

As was discussed in Part 1 – Settings for Discovery, these tools are to be used in a setting of play-based discovery. Although rooted in play, this setting establishes the framework of exploration for the child. It is a purposeful construct seeking answers to specific questions about our urban neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, to the child, it is themed play.

Through their own initiatives and in the encouragement of their own narratives, the Kit helps to focus the children on the questions at hand or the theme in play. The initial premise of the theme is exploration, the questions or challenges put to the children are hidden deeper within the neighbourhoods in which we live; can only be answered in the excitement of exploring the unknown. Even familiar neighbourhoods can seem new again when we question them in different ways. It is in this newness, this unfolding revelation to children that makes exploration exciting for them. The tools in the Kit are not only purposeful in their ability to encourage the spirit of exploration they are embarking upon, but also are specific to quickly document these unfolding revelations.
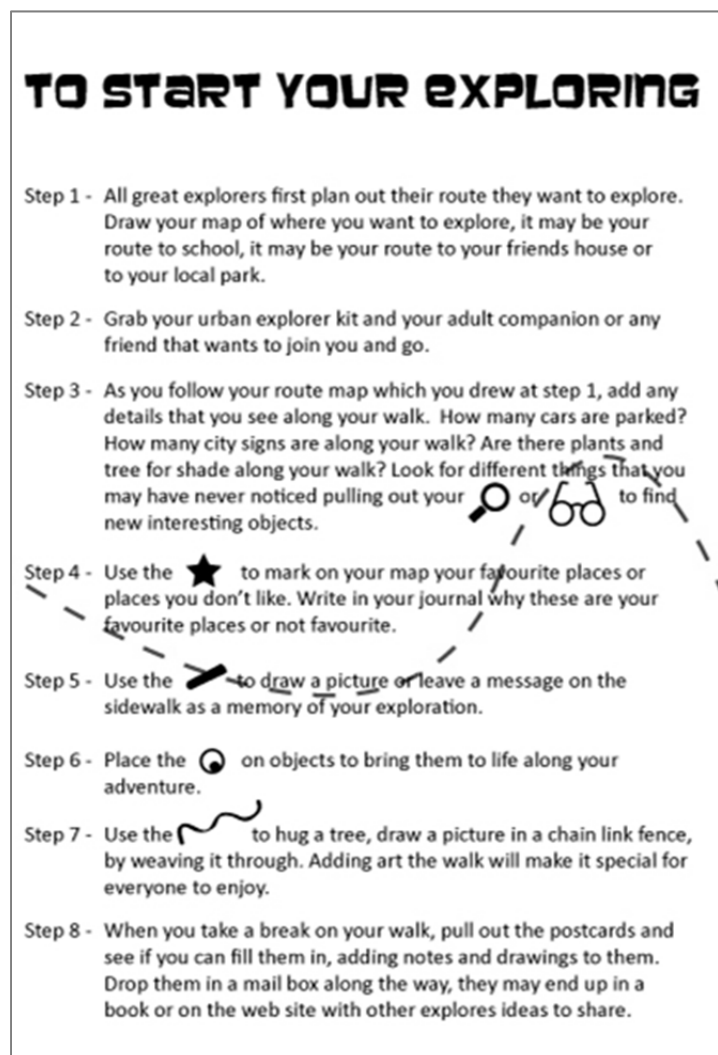
Conversely, the tools also require that sometime be taken to use them. Although the creation of a narrative from the unravelling of the posed questions may be immediate in children, recording this narrative, so that it may be shared, necessarily takes time. The individual must not just *look* at what they are exploring, but *see* what it is they are discovering. Comprehension requires that the child focus on elements of their exploration in the context of unravelling the mystery of the question put to them. The more detailed the documentation, the more engaged the understanding would be.

All of these tools in the Kit are specifically selected for their familiarity to children. Chalk, and ribbon and yellow school pencils and stickers are part of a child's every day, hands-on existence, and are frequently called upon to immediately support a child's fervent imagination with success. The canvas explorer bag, uniquely developed to support this innovation, was derived from the need to allow children to be independent with all of their explorer tools. In this way, our explorer's adult companions are not (entirely) responsible for the kit, allowing a more free engagement with their children on their walk. Giving the junior explorer free access to their tools not prompted by their adult companions, allows the observation and exploration to be self-directed.

The small magnifying glass, compass, wide-rimmed play-glasses, and explorer bag are props to support the theme of urban exploration and strengthen the setting within which the children will work. Pencils, sharpeners and erasers, ink pens, coiled notepad, stickers, and a clipboard are all tools to document the unfolding narratives. The coiled notepad, postcards, and reference guide are all tools to share the discovery of their narratives with family and friends. In addition, perhaps, the chalk, googly-eyes, and ribbons are all tools to share with others that they were there; looking for answers and leaving a mark from which others can start their own stories.

To children, documenting what they discover and the beginnings of their unique stories are completely woven together. The tools offered in the Junior Urban Explorer Kit, when use in the setting of an urban exploration, answer the first two guiding conditions of this innovation:  how can these tools enable story telling; and, how can these tools document these stories. How these stories are collected and shared are next explored.

# TO START YOUR EXPLORING

Step 1 - All great explorers first plan out their route they want to explore. Draw your map of where you want to explore, it may be your route to school, it may be your route to your friends house or to your local park.

Step 2 - Grab your urban explorer kit and your adult companion or any friend that wants to join you and go.

Step 3 - As you follow your route map which you drew at step 1, add any details that you see along your walk.  How many cars are parked? How many city signs are along your walk? Are there plants and tree for shade along your walk? Look for different things that you may have never noticed pulling out your ⚲ or 👓 to find new interesting objects.

Step 4 - Use the ★ to mark on your map your favourite places or places you don't like. Write in your journal why these are your favourite places or not favourite.

Step 5 - Use the ✎ to draw a picture or leave a message on the sidewalk as a memory of your exploration.

Step 6 - Place the ◉ on objects to bring them to life along your adventure.

Step 7 - Use the 〜 to hug a tree, draw a picture in a chain link fence, by weaving it through. Adding art the walk will make it special for everyone to enjoy.

Step 8 - When you take a break on your walk, pull out the postcards and see if you can fill them in, adding notes and drawings to them. Drop them in a mail box along the way, they may end up in a book or on the web site with other explores ideas to share.

(Image 07: Junior Explorer Kit, guide)

**Towards a Learning Innovation and Urban Strategy – Part 3**

*A Way to Share Stories*

Returning to the guiding principles of this research, storytelling is a natural communication method that children use instinctively to express and test their ideas with their peers and adult companions about their lives and how they see their world. This makes narrative storytelling an organic, natural process to synthesize information and connect them with their surrounding community. Building on their stories or stories they have heard about their community can build their community spirit.[46] [47]

With children, telling stories is only fun (and, by extension, useful) if there is someone who will not only listen, but be engaged with a child's story. Stories in younger children (ages 5 – 7) are likely to be more fluid, quickly shaped by the experience immediately at hand. As children get older, their observational skills, and ability to compound experiences towards the creation of an overarching perception, complete with a set of expectations, become more confident. In all ages, it is in this confidence that their ideas are meaningful, that children are excited to share. As discussed in the section "Storytelling", if the settings of a child's observations are of neighbourhood, or community, or even city, the sharing of these ideas with other meaningful observations can create a powerful dialogue, which quickly recognizes challenges facing a neighbourhood and/or community. Just as quickly, ideas are vetted about how to address these challenges, and built upon successes.

Nevertheless, what happens at the end of a walk? How can the momentum of these ideas be carried through to another day? How can successes be measured, and serve as an inspiration for others?

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[46] Richards, A. (2012) The Story is just the start. *Early Childhood News – Article reading Centre*
[47] Coskie, T., Trudel, H., Vohs, R. (2010) Creating Community through storytelling.

When framed by questions about neighbourhood and community, the documentation of stories (vis-à-vis the Junior Urban Explorer Toolkit) is essential to firmly committing to a child's mind what it is they observe during their explorations of their city is important.  As discussed previously, it is irrelevant if that observation has meaning to their adult companions.  It matters most that this observation is important to the child, so that we can delve into why it may be important to the child.  Moreover, in the documentation of this, the recording of these observations, we may see how the discovery is important to others. However, documentation is also that first necessary step in the collection of stories.

The elements for the Junior Urban Explorer Kit are selected for their familiarity and accessibility:  the template is easily assembled if more are required; components easily replaced if lost; groups can work from the logs and postcards therein; and there is no instrument that needs any greater understanding than how to colour. Just like the Kit, the ability to contribute to a sharing network must be just as familiar and accessible. Further, just like a child's observation skills grow with age, so must the way in which they contribute.

Although the strengths of internet-based programs immediately spring to mind, and the successful integration of a sharing platform – the JUEK-Box – will be explored as part of this strategy, as it does not represent that first step to be taken by our youngest explorers (ages 5 to 7). Postage-paid postcards are provided with the Junior Urban Explorer Kit (refer to Appendix C). Although certainly not limited in their appeal to any age, these post-cards are provided primarily for our youngest explorers as a means to upload their observations to the sharing network. For example, having just completed a walk with their school chums and teacher, and having observed and discovered many things, the postcards provide a simple tool for the children to send a message. Whether this is a single message of importance, or many excited ideas speaking of wonderful potential, is again not the focus. The intention is that, with the gentle focusing of their teacher, the children look back at what they have just observed and commit them to a narrative they believe is important to share. Each child may send a postcard, or many, or they may act as a

class to send a singular message. It is in the very action of mailing back the postcard that will instil the belief in the child that this is an important action, for the contents are going out into the world to be read by others. More importantly, that what they are mailing out with importance is that they have a voice in their community, and they want to share it. With as little assistance as possible, this postcard can be completed and mailed, ultimately finding its way to the sharing network – the JUEK-Box.

### *The JUEK-Box*

The JUEK-Box is an internet-based program developed to support the collection and cross analysis (sharing) of our young explorers' discoveries and observations. The actual development of this web platform is not the focus of this research, but it is the concept that an umbrella program must exist whereby an ever-expanding dialogue may be supported, promoted, and easily accessed towards bettering our neighbourhoods. Applying the success of 'pin board' blog-sites, entries can be uploaded by 'pinning' their commentary to a map of their community, expanding to where this may be in the city and across the globe. Very much in the same way locations with information are pinned to Google-Maps, individuals can quickly find their community, and many others, to read about how other children are seeing their world and what work may (or may not) be underway to effect change.

The prime contributors to this network are school-aged children accompanied by their mentors. Once their location is 'tagged' with an urban observation, it is given a unique visual identifier complete with a QR tag (similar in workings to *Murmur)* and deeper links:  postcards mailed back to JUEK-Box may be uploaded for the youngest ages, audio and visual media taken from explorations for older kids. As noted by Macdonald-Carlson's[48], visual mapping connects children to their communities and strengthens their sense of place.

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[48] MacDonald-Carlson, H. (2003) Developing a sense of place: Exploring ideas of Home and Community. *Canadian Children Child Study*

As information begins to add neighbourhoods and cities with each new observation recorded, more and more opportunities can be offered to help support the initial explorations. The ability of web-based platforms to expand content towards enhancing the on-line function has been proven time and again. JUEK-Box would be expected to grow, providing fun and easy templates to create a graphic discovery newsletter or create your own postcards. Provide more questions to be asked during explorations, or let you create your own which may be of help for others. The idea is to create automatic links to the civic leaders in order that new contributions to current community blogs are pushed into their e-mail. More than a place to share their observations, children can reach out to their peers and ask questions about another's community.

As part of an organized school-based curriculum or youth leadership program (i.e. Scouts / Girl Guides) or in the actions of a concerned family in a neighbourhood with challenges, all of this work develops a heightened urban awareness and literacy. In addition, it is a voice, which can be shared with everyone.

## Growing the Story – Accessibility is the Key

### *Pricing Accessibility*

With the tools of this Learning Innovation set in place, a way to "deliver the goods" is necessary to ensure there can be a continued collection and growth of the stories that already populate the JUEK-Box maps and forums.  The growth of a collection of anything takes time, and the collection of the myriad of urban voices to create a relevant, urban dialogue will need a place to live and grow other than just in the ether of the internet.  The strength of these stories is found in their multiplicity.  The nuance between each shaping an essential urban history from the perspective of our children, and opening necessary commentary towards how we may help our cities grow.

The Junior Urban Explorer Kit was initially designed to be used by families.  Purchased from small, independent creative retailers (i.e. Love of Labour, Swipe Books, and Red Rocket Coffee) at an approximated cost of $12.00, civic-minded parents could purchase the Kit(s) to support an open morning or afternoon with their children.  As commented earlier, children learn best with support and participation from their parents, and the price must be set to ensure product attractiveness beyond its learning objectives:  the cost must be directly relatable to both the cost of an afternoon of a comparable outing with their children; and, the cost must ensure accessibility at many income levels.

Accessibility is critical to the success of this innovation.  The widest possible collection of urban stories, from all corners of the city will create the most compelling urban voices.  Accessible pricing will encourage introduction of this innovation beyond the initial premise of direct parent-child engagements within their communities.  The cost is such that it could be brought to a birthday party as an activity, into schools as a lunch-hour club, and/or as focussed learning efforts in boys' and girls' clubs.  The nature of the initial exploration was intended to be as flexible as possible to allow children to take the time they need to observe their urban environs, and to take their time to document their observations in a way which is meaningful to them.  As one grand excursion or in many smaller explorations, by documenting in the field and returning to share notes as a group, or in the time spent uploading to the JUEK-Box and perusing how others see their neighbourhoods and joining the learning forums thereon, this innovation is an excellent catalyst for group play and discovery.  As such, the pricing needs to ensure accessibility by groups with limited resources.  Further, pricing should be at a level where corporate sponsorship for group activities – if purchasing in quantities – is not onerous.  A 25% reduction in the cost of the Kit for thirty children represents only a $90 dollar expense for a corporation, but can make the entire innovation available to children for $9.00 per kit.

*Theme Development and Route Accessibility*

The simplicity of this innovation is that one only need step outside and into an area the person or group understands to be in their neighbourhood: you just step outside and the adventure begins, anywhere. Ironically, with this simplicity many will not know how to start to define conditions for creating routes and organizing their day.

The walks are to be directed specifically by the explorer with their family, or as determined by groups of children to be supervised with their mentors. A guiding premise of this innovation is to generate observations from our children which are unique to them about their community, not what their adult mentors want them to see, study or record. However, this innovation can be expanded to include themed explorations to specifically document an urban condition. Themed post cards, as provided in the Kit and as available online through the JUEK-Box, will identify current issues being discussed in many communities throughout our cities. An initial sampling of themed topics to be included on one of the fifteen postcards may include:

- ***Public Art and Graffiti :***

  Is their art around your school? Who did it? Do you like it? What is it made of? Should it stay? Is there graffiti around your school? Is it art? Who made it? Should it stay? How does it make the school look? Are you proud that this art is on your school? Do others enjoy this art and/or graffiti? What kind of art would you put on your school? Why is this important?

- ***Trees and Gardens** :*

  Are there many trees on your street? Are they big or small, old or young? Are trees growing in number on the street, or are they losing numbers? What are lost trees being replaced by? Are there many gardens on the street? What is in them? What was in the garden last year? How do they make the street look, in summer and winter? Are there many birds and animals in the trees

and gardens?  Are we losing gardens? Why? Does a garden on the street belong to the owner, or to everyone?

- *Sidewalks and Paths :*

Why are there different sidewalks in your neighbourhood?  Where are the biggest sidewalks?  Do you play on any of these sidewalks?  Are the sidewalks nice?  Are there lots of places to sit and enjoy something?  Is there lots of room on the sidewalks?  Where are the most interesting sidewalks?  Where are the most interesting paths?  Who built these paths? What are these sidewalks and paths like during the day, evening and night?  Do lots of people enjoy these sidewalks and paths?  What might make them better, if anything?

- *Light and Dark :*

Are there bright places in your neighbourhood?  Why are they bright?  Are there dark corners in your neighbourhood? Why are they dark?  How do both of these places make you feel?  How are they different between day, evening and night?

- *Parks and Play* :

Where are there parks?  Where could there be parks?  Are they for everyone? What is your favorite part of the park?  What is your least favorite part?  Are there lots of trees and planting?  Do you like grass, sand, sidewalks, or all of them?  Is there any water for play?  Is there enough places to sit, or is sitting on the ground just fine?

- *Streets and Play;*

- *Storefronts and Shops :*

Is there a street with stores in your neighbourhood? What are the types of stores?  Are the stores busy?  Are all the storefronts full?  Have the stores changed, and how?  What stores would you like to see?  What stores do you think would benefit your neighbourhood?  Why?  Do you like the store signs?  How could you make them better?  Are the stores looked after and well maintained?  How could you make them better?

- ***Busses and Trains :***

   Are there busses, streetcars, or trains in your community?  Where are the stops?  Are the stops accessible to all?  Where do they take you?  How do you find out where they take you? Do they operate safely within the community? What are their routes through the community?  Are there different routes which would serve the community better?  Are there different modes which would serve the community better?

Each of these topics may be explored in only one excursion, undertaking a different theme with each new day.  Or an excursion may result in the need for a return visit as expressed by the children, understanding that there is more to be discovered.  Organizing the time of one's child or for a group must simply revolve around providing ample time to encourage a commentary about any one of the topics, or a topic of their own, focused around the central message of "tell me a story about what you see."  Part of this time is dedicated to adding the route, discoveries and narrations to the JUEK-Box web-site (as previously discussed in "The JUEK-Box" Section, page 35).

### Accessibility to Opportunity for Experience

The early success of any product brought to the market is always connected to a heightened public awareness that there is a need to be addressed, and that this need can be satisfied by the product presented.  How to heighten public awareness that urban discovery is critical to our cities is challenging as it is seemingly esoteric in nature, even though we all have a direct responsibility in the care of our neighbourhoods.

The launch, and continued growth, of this innovation will be found in the way it was first conceived:  in a group setting. As part of the structured Jane's Walk Junior 2012, junior explorers learned how to use this tool as a group, and found great fun in sharing their sketches and doodles with one another, as well as with their parents and the walk animator.  The strategy here is to find a similar activity which can

choreograph a series of excursions and help initiate the building of a story-telling experience. One tool which has proven successful to introduce new learning concepts to children is through school-break recreation camps.

This innovation is easily packaged as the Junior Urban Explorer Camp, and is proposed to be first offered as part of the spring and summer break camps offered by the City of Toronto Parks & Recreation, University of Toronto (UofT) Jr. Blues Mini-University, and the Design Exchange (DX) Creative Camps. These camps, typically one week of day-long activities during school breaks, would provide participating children with a series of focused opportunities to get out and explore their city. The UofT and DX camps, located at Spadina/Harbord and at King/Bay respectively, are more singularly situated. This means children travel out of their home neighbourhoods to attend these camps, so the notion of community excursions will need to be customized to discovering more broad-based stories as they may affect the city as a whole. The City of Toronto Parks & Rec Camps are located in community centres and parks throughout the city, and should be customized to let kids explore their home environs.

In both the macro- and micro-focused camps, excursion animators work with their camper explorers to:

1. Understand strict rules of safe play and exploration with the City, and online;

2. Understand the tools of the Junior Urban Explorer Kit;

3. Review some of the themes they may want to explore each day. Depending on the age group, a single theme may develop into a complex narration worth dedicating an entire week of discovery;

4. Understand the importance of stories as a part of our collective history and learning;

5. Outline a few ways to document what they see and/or feel about their excursion, but by no means limit the campers' forms of expression to create their narrations;

6. Dedicate time each day to review the campers' discoveries as an oral storytelling, recording those stories as documentation to be uploaded to the JUEK-Box;

7. Explore the JUEK-Box website to see how other camps are narrating both positive and challenging forces in their communities;

8. Commit their own stories to the growing and living history of their city by uploading to the JUEK-Box.

Although these camps are primarily intended for ages to match the designs of the Kit, their influence and who may participate at what level in each camp continues to grow. This is a standard progression of responsibility for returning children to the same program, and encourages the development of new leadership. This is of obvious benefit to future campers, but when taken out of the camps, can create generations of youth who are more tuned into the changing dynamics of their city with each year. This is the legacy of wilderness camps such as Outward Bound, whereby youth mentored as leaders long fulfill a responsibility to their natural environs later in life. Children may start as young urban explorers, but the intention is to impart upon them a skill which will inspire civic action when required.

At the highest level of these camps, participants (who may also be leaders in other camps of younger ages) would explore how to create an urban voice, where none exists, through the power of their stories.

Primarily focused with the JUEK-Box, campers could begin to disseminate their stories to media, city planning functions, even the mayor, to raise awareness about both the good and bad in their neighbourhoods and city. Through the JUEK-Box and guided by camp leaders, our Junior Urban Explorers can learn how to reach out to effect change, and to connect with others to grow their own voice with the power of others. The ultimate objective of this innovation is to create a dynamic urban history from the perspective of our youth and children to be referenced by those who can influence and create change in our cities.

With new contributions being added nearly continuously with each camp program, with each week of camps, and as a continuing forum whereby campers remain free to access the JUEK-Box interfaces, the story of our cities will grow quickly into an enormous database of direct observations tempered by the personal intuitions, perceptions, and feelings of our children and youth. Some of these stories may be overt and describe the need for immediate action. Some calls for action may be found in a steady progression of stories as they change over months and years – the proverbial "writing on the wall". The purpose of the JUEK-Box is be both the place to share repository of stories, but is the place where our

children and youth can connect to effect change.

This is the ultimate objective of this innovation.

## Conclusion

As our cities continue to grow, shift with change almost before our eyes by forces well beyond our control, these deeper connections are becoming harder to nurture. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find our grounding. As families cope with living in this environment, they pay little attention to the stories of the neighbourhoods they have moved into, or have lived for many years but cannot comprehend the change. Stories, which have given neighbourhoods their rooting in an almost urban oral history, are being forgotten not because they no longer have meaning, but because people are choosing not to look for them anymore. Without these connections, our neighbourhoods are being strained for there is no guiding framework within which families can measure their place within the community.

The ultimate aim of this strategy and innovation is to awaken children to their urban environs. In this awakening can be found a deep-seeded connection to the places where we live our lives, and it reflects a genuine understanding of how our places grow and change. Most importantly, it is in this connection to "place" for which we may all become advocates for positive change in our communities. The stories we take with us about the places we visit are informed first by the things we experience. As we explore these places, shaped by everything from our senses to our experience of culture and family, work and play, they unfold where we explore. As we share these experiences and find common values, these become our collective stories about a place and almost always, give a deeper meaning to the place from where these stories are born. This is our memory of place, and the foundations of a spirit of community.

 Children inherently look for these stories, and are interested in them. Whatever that story may be, it is significant to the child. When it has a direct connection to their immediate home and environment, a lasting impression is left with this individual for years to come. It is this imprint,

which is measurable whether positive or negative, about his/her neighbourhood. By extension, how one's perception has changed as a response to this first imprint, and can be the catalyst for activism and to encourage change, towards a more rewarding path

Like Jane Jacobs, the key to her activism was through simple observation. The catalyst of her activism was an understanding of how a city wants to work, not how it should work. However, it came first from watching, then sharing stories in a feedback loop testing her own hypothesis against the realities of the city she observed.

The Junior Urban Explorer Kit, and its supporting sharing framework, are tools to tune our children into the natural workings of a city, to find their own feedback loop. It is in their more naïve perspective that children can uniquely contribute to a broader impression, or sense of a place. Research supports that children can provide independent understanding of place and can lead our communities towards positive changes if the seeds of what is truly important in our communities are revealed to our children in a way that is accessible. Equally as important, once revealed, they must be able to communicate successfully – through storytelling – the treasures they have found.

The notion of urban awareness in our children is growing in support around the world. The urban explorer kit is my innovation to engage children with their families to take a deeper look at their cities. The over-arching strategy is to begin a dialogue early in life about our urban environment and our communities, a dialogue, which grows to become as deep, rooted in care and concern as children now recognize with our natural environment. The urban explorer kit is simple, but focused. More importantly, in its simplicity is found accessibility.

future city, urban change uncertain understanding w/ world around

CONNECTION W/ COMMUNITY

sense of place - Urban context
sense of spirit - invisible & tangible physical space

learning young sets the stage for future

SPACES BECOME PLACES

grounded
builds confidence

BIG PICTURE
Urban youth program for Community understanding and learn about urban polices & context

LITTLE PICTURE
Knowing your neighbourhood learning landmarks stories understanding change happends

Jane's Walk Jr. = ABC's of urban literacy

share / transfer knowledge

building an understanding & connection

URBAN SPACES

YOUNG CITIZENS (5-11)

PROBLEM SOLVING

INSTILLS EMPATHY

urban jungle
urban literacy

COMMUNITY ENGAGE YOUTH

STORIES
creating understanding sharing knowledge instill lessons

INFLUX OF NEIGHBOURHOOD INCREASE IN POPULATION CHANGE IN LANDSCAPE

PLAY BASED LEARNING & NARRATIVE STORYTELLING

YOUTH IN URBAN SPACES
less open space
unknown neighbours
disengaged / lack of voice
lack of identity

voice to express
builds confidence in adult life

future citizens of our city

foundation of learning though history

self actualizing style of learning (new gen.)

(Figure 04: Summary Chart)

Page | 39

**Annotated Bibliography**

Jane Jacobs

Doig. W. (2012). Stop thinking big. *Salon.com [www.salon.com/2012/16/stop_thinking_big/print/](www.salon.com/2012/16/stop_thinking_big/print/)*

*This short article, spoke about current live actions, which stem from the beliefs of Jane Jacob's. This is relevant to my research for it discusses how other cities are finding ways to engage neighbourhoods to take control of their community needs.*

Farrow, J. and Hess, P. (2010)*. Walkabilty in Toronto's High-Rise Neighbourhoods – Final Report. [http://janeswalk.net/assets/uploads_docs/Walkability_Full_Report.pdf](http://janeswalk.net/assets/uploads_docs/Walkability_Full_Report.pdf)*

*The research within the walkability reports focuses on eight Toronto high-rise neighbourhoods. Choosing to use only one of Jane Jacobs's philology as a mechanism of investigation, a strong community is founded on its walkability. The report's findings that were relevant were – "on the hostile environments that were not designed for walking; poor walking conditions contribute to disenfranchised residents; and in spite of the findings from question #6 residents enjoyed walking in their community for the connections it bring them.*

Ford. H. (2011). The Life and philosophy of Jane Jacobs. *http:www.articlesalley.com/*
*The article is a summary Jane Jacob's philosophy based on the inter connection of nature and human interactions within neighbourhoods. This connection of the environment between people and their city influenced the psychological wellbeing of the people.*

Jacobs, J. (1961) "*The Death and Life of Great American Cities".* Random House: Toronto, Ontario.
*This being Jane's first book, it was the pinnacle of her career as an urban analyst and created a ripple within the urban design practise. The prime focus of the book was her examination of how cities actually worked for the people inhabiting the spaces. This critical view of cities also looked at strategies to enhance city performance, from urban planning and economical structures.*

Roberts. M., Lloyd-Jones. T., Erickson. B. and Nice. S. (1999) Place and space in the networked city: conceptualising the integrated Metropolis. *Journal of Urban Design, 4(1), pp. 51–67. 1357-4809/99/010051-16*

*The paper discusses how an integrated networked city could be developed as a future right solution. Comparing the analysis of urban and suburban centres, what are the draws for people to each and what are the down sides. The paper references Jane Jacobs's concept of a city network as an organism stating, "that a city should not be planned by the buildings but by the continuities of routes and spaces."*

(2007). How Jane Jacobs changed my life. *Urban photo*

*The overall intent of this article was a summary of Jane Jacobs's philosophy and urban ideals; the city as an organism; she advocated for ground up urban governance these thoughts, discussions within her book "The Death and Life of Great American Cities" led to a new philosophy within urban planning circles known as "New Urbanism".*

[http://www.janeswalk.net/](http://www.janeswalk.net/)

*This official web site to the Canadian Jane's walk organization explains the walks, its purpose, and the history behind the walk and Jane Jacobs.*

Play-based exploration

Elkind, D. (2012) Learning through play. Community playthings.

[http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/valueofplay/learningthroughplay.html](http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/valueofplay/learningthroughplay.html)
*The author clearly explains the intrinsic value of self-directed play as a means of early child learning. Today's society sees play as a luxury, associating play with fun and relaxation. For young children in particular, self-initiated play is a basic mode of learning.*

Gray, P. (2009). Empowering Neighbourhoods and restoring play: a modest proposal. *Psychology Today (http://www/psychologytoday.com) October 7, 2009 – 7:37am*

*Free play is essential in the social development of a child, the most important is that is provides opportunities for children to problem solve with peers without parent intervention. Play has been the primary vehicle for children's education throughout most of human history. The lack of free play in a child's life currently is due to the extreme fear parents have within their neighbourhoods, this stems in most part that parents place their social life within their work life vs. their neighbourhood. Not knowing their neighbours creates a sense of unknown therefore seen as strangers, and strangers perceived as potential dangers. The author was giving a challenge; he developed a proposal – "Empower a neighborhood to design, create, and manage a safe haven for play and learning for people of all ages". If this project is successful, the author feels it would increase local pride, a sense of community and opportunities for children to find one another and play free and safe.*

Herrington, S., Lesmeister, C.,Nicholls, J. & Stefiuk, K. (2007). An informational guide to young children's outdoor play spaces 7Cs. *West coast Child Care Resource Centre & Consortium for Health, Intervention, Learning, and Development (CHILD)*
*This document was the base tool, which KA+P used as a guide for their Jane's Walk Jr.*
*play: it is about possible alternative worlds, which involve 'supposing', and 'as if', which lift players to their highest levels of functioning. This involves being imaginative, creative, original and innovative. Play: it is about participants exploring in ideas, feelings, and relationships. It involves reflecting on becoming aware of what we know. Play: it is an integrating mechanism, which brings together everything we learn, know, feel, and understand.*

Hewes, J. (2007) Let the Children Play: Nature's answer to Early Learning. *Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre. Canadian Council on Learning.*

*http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/ECLKC/lessons/LearningthroughPlay_long.pdf*

*This article summaries the bases for early childhood learning through unstructured self-directed play as a fundamental right for all children as outlined in Article 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The idea that all children need play for the sake of play to explore themselves in the context of their world; unfortunately there is a current trend to reduce free exploratory play for the need for younger and younger children to develop their academic skills to survive on the current world economy. This article strongly point out the trend to reduce free exploratory is not the case, it actual has the reverse affect.*

Kane, P. (2000) Play for today. *The Observer*

*This article is about changing the work ethic world into a play ethic world and how this shift will not only benefit the health and innovative outlook on workers but will be economically beneficial to the business. The fact that we feel less connected to our communities than ever before; we feel like hollow citizens. We believe in the rat race of the busy effect, yet there is an undercurrent of questions to why we are stuck in this industrial worker mind set. Play is becoming a discussion within the work place to connect and engage works into a more creative engaged community, this seems a simple translation to what is good for the workplace could also be good for the community.*

Miller, D., Tichota, K., White, J. (2009) Young Children learn through authentic play in a nature explore classroom: a white paper based on research conducted at Dimensions Early education programs in Lincoln, NE.

*The paper discusses how important authentic play is for a whole child-learning outcome. It allows children to explore, express, and create an understanding of their own world. Play is learning in the eyes of young children.*

Sarkissian.W., Hurford. D., Wenman. C., (2010). Creative Community Planning Transformative Engagement Methods for Working at the Edge. *Toronto, ON: UTP Distribution pp. 21-23*
*This article talks discusses the value play has towards building community engagement, and in breaking down preconceived ideas, allowing innovative new ways of looking at a problems. The value play can offer at getting beyond the stiff constraints and open to adaptive possibilities is a strength that is underestimated. The expression of the play ethic is about having the confidence to be spontaneous, creative, and empathic across all areas of life.*

Storytelling

Coskie, T., Trudel, H., Vohs, R. (2010) Creating Community through storytelling. *Talking Points, Volume 22, Number 1. The National Council of Teachers of English.*
*The article discusses how the power of storytelling can build confidence and self-awareness, creating trust within groups and building community connections within a classroom and school.*

Gottschall, J. (2012) Why Storytelling is the ultimate weapon. Fast Company.

http://www.fastcocreate.com/1680581/why-storytelling-is-the-ultimate-weapon 6/25/2012

*The article discusses how the power of storytelling and how we as humans connect to stories better than through data collection. It is the emotional response, which holds us engaged with a story.*

Gottschall, J. (2012) The Storytelling Animal, How stories make us human. *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. New York, New York. ISBN 978-0-547-39140-3*

This book explores all levels of storytelling within us as humans. How over time we have evolved with our stories from around the fire to print and now into the virtual world of video games. The book explores how stories have been used for psychological testing, marketing ploys, and political sway. Stories are part of our fiber, just as breathing is to our health. The author confirms that stories are not vanishing from our world but are becoming more part as the pressures of reality pull on us.

Hensel, W., Rasco, T. (1992) Storytelling as a Method for Teaching Values and Attitudes. *Academic Medicine Vol.67 number 8 August 1992: pg. 500-504*

*This article discusses the rational and benefit for story telling within the education of the medical profession. Storytelling can help students overcome crises and come to grips with troubling aspect through storytelling, allowing the discussion of values and attitudes to following in helping students understand the message. Creating personal stories based on experiences and lessons learn helps in their continued moral development. This seems very similar to folklore tales that help create beliefs, values, and moral development in communities or group of people.*

Kim, J., Lund, A., Dombrowski, C. (2010) Mobilizing Attention: Storytelling for Innovation. *Interactions March + April 2010.* DOI: 10.1145/69977581

*This paper discusses the importance of storytelling for innovation. Throughout human history we have told stories in many forms, as if we are hardwired to process information in the form of stories. Stories are natural communication vehicles for groups to explore new ideas and to express new thoughts. This information is one of the ways that could help the translation of urban literacy to young citizens.*

Richards, A. (2012) The Story is just the start. *Early Childhood News – Article reading Center.*

*http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=200*

*This article discusses the importance of engagement with the listeners into the story; how active participation is critical in the connection offering long-term education. There is a value to have storytelling part of an age appropriate curriculum.*

Payne, M., Barbera,J. (2010) A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory, 2nd Edition. *Wiley + Blackwell.* P.116 – 119. ISBN 978-1-4051-6890-8

*This section of the book discusses the use of stories, lullaby's, folklore and fairy tales as used as children's stories through time, culture, and religion to teach social rules and norms. How this teachings building an understanding and security with children to grown into what their society needs as "good" adults.*

<u>Youth & Community</u>

Dyer, H., Ngui, M. (2010) Watch this space designing, defending and sharing public spaces. *Kids Can Press is a Corus Entertainment Company. ISBN 978-1-55453-293-3*

*This book intended for youth from grade 6 and up. It educates youth on what is public space today and where public spaces came from in the past. The book contextualizes sharing spaces, how public spaces are designed and by whom as well as why public spaces are worth fitting for within your community. As a resource for teacher, parents, and community organizations this book helps communicate all levels of public space, place, and life within both suburban and urban context offering a base for knowledge sharing and discussions on the need to engage within community public spaces.*

MacDonald-Carlson, H. (2003) Developing a sense of place: Exploring ideas of Home and Community. *Canadian Children Child Study*

*This research article which discusses how young children create a sense of place and a sense of self through a balance of visual and verbal mapping activities, through active research within a primary classroom setting. It outlines the idea of mapping and connecting to the geography and*

*architecture around helps build the bonds to place. It shows how prominent landmarks are more likely to hold a stronger emotional bond to where one lives.*

Melaville, A. Berg, A., Blank, M. (2006) Community-Based Learning Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship. *Coalition for Community schools*

*The focus of the article is how community based education is the foundation of democracy. The paper highlights six models with a particular emphasis on community problem solving; academically based community service, civic education, environment-based education, place-based learning, service learning and work-based learning. "Students learn and problem solve in the context of their lives and communities."*

Menard. M. (2010) Youth Civic Engagement. *Social Affairs Division Parliamentary Information and Research Services Publication No. 2010-23-E*

*This article, clearly explains what civic engagement with youth is, what it means to family, school and media, and what causes disengaged civic youth. It also through research studies confirms the value it holds on the community and country.*

Murray, S. (2012). Urban living: disenfranchised youth has role to play in improving cities.

*Financial Times. http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b77a0468-402f-11e1-82f6-00144feab49a.html*

*This article speaks directly about finding the tools to engage youth in their city. It states that when asked youth are excited to be heard and get involved within their communities.*

Prince-Mitchell, M. (2011) Are we raising good citizens? Psychology Today (www.psychologytoday.com) October 12, 2011 – 9:10am

*This post in psychology today discusses that research shows that children engaged in community outreach programs are happier and are more successful as adults. ``Generationon`` is a new*

*youth program described by the author as a ways to engage young citizens to not only change their community but possibly the world.*

Ragan, D. (2006) The world urban forum 2006, Vancouver Working Group discussion paper; The Youth Friendly City. *The Environmental Youth Alliance.*

*This report is very thorough on an action plan to engage youth through city policies, planning, and governance. The paper focuses on local and global opportunities for communities and governments to engage youth within city action, creating solutions for these bodies to consider as a move forward item. It discusses how there are great programs already in existence within communities which need to be supported by local government and community groups.*

(2006) The Health of Toronto's Young Children: Volume 1 – seating the context. Toronto Public Health.

*This article is a statistical compilation of children and their families within Toronto; looking at population, where they live, cultural and ethnic diversity, types of family structure, size, and age of parents over a range of census years – 1992 – 2000 approx.*

(2006) Engaging children and young people in community planning. Scottish Executive. ISBN: 0-7559-4647-2

*Children and young people are an important and challenging group. "Involving them now is an investment in the future of our public services, ensuring that they are responsive to our changing needs in coming years, but also an investment in citizenship for Scotland." Tom McCabe, Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform – this quote sums up the intent of the document.*

(2012) UNICEF The State of the world's children, Children in an urban world. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). ISBN: 978-92-806-4597-2

*This report discusses the effect the urban population shift is having on children worldwide. It looks to all government to find a way to include their children in the conversations to improve and affect their communities around equally.*

Design Research

Bennett, W. Lance. Changing Citizenship in the Digital Age. Civic Life Online: Learning How Digital Media Can Engage Youth. *Edited by W. Lance Bennett. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008. 1–24. doi: 10.1162/dmal.9780262524827.001

*This paper discusses how youths connection with the political world has changed based on their (youths) connection with the digital world of discussion and how the political world has not been able to catch up with these youth and engage them within their playing field. The paper concludes that the engagers (politicians, parents, educators…) need to look at things differently and engage youth within their world vs. the other way around.*

*Blanchet-Cohen, N., Cook, P. (2006) Growing up in Cities Canada, Creative Tools: Civic Engagement of young people. International Institute for child rights and development*
*The book based on research that shows more and more children are growing up in urban cities within Canada and that the friendlier and safer a city is developed for youth the better it is for all. This book also founded on the research and polices of Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

Castello, L. (2006) City & Time and Places: Bridging the concept of place to urban conservation planning. *City & Time 2 (1): 5. URL: http://www.ct.ceci-br.org*
*This paper first discusses what the traditional concept of place is. Then the author looks at how integrated conservation planning can be approached using the concept of placemaking and*

*placemarketing. Looking at two case studies to understand how the intrinsic value of place and the perceived meanings it holds with the communities, aiding planning by use of place theory.*

Landry, C. (2000) The Creative City. *Earthscan ISBN 1853836133*

*This book is an interesting understanding of where cities are and how they need to be more engaged with their citizens to create a paradigm shift for new sustainable futures. The book offers an imaginative plan in the development of urban life and a clear and detailed toolkit of the methods by which our cities can be revived and revitalized.*

Najafi, M., Shariff, M. (2011) The Concept of Place and Sense of Place in Architectural Studies. *International Journal of Human and Social Sciences 6:3 2011*

*This paper investigates the value that a sense of place holds within the studies of human and social sciences. It looks at first the concept of sense of place, its characteristics and scale as well as the attachments people place on their sense of place.*

Norberg-Schultz, C. (1979) Genius Loci Towards a phenomenology of Architecture. Rizzoli ISBN: 0847802876. The Concept of Place pgs. 27- 38

This chapter within the book focus on how and why we connect to spaces. How we turn spaces into places through the bonds, memories, stories, and events that we have with space. The chapter breaks down how from the construction and manufacturing of space by architecture, it can emphasise strong feelings of a place that build into community and city places. The chapter concludes that not only are we affected by space but how space if affected by us, that space and we are bound together to make us whole.

Sanford, R. (2008) The Weekender Effect, Hyperdevelopment in Mountain Towns. Rocky

Mountain Books. ISBN 978-1-897522-10-3

Deep and meaningful connections to place are a fundamental element of what makes us human.

This book is a plea for all to look at mountain communities and preserve local values, cultures,

and landscape, which can be integrated into the urban spaces to teach that all communities have

local values and cultures that need to be understood as the city expands around us.

Wachira, R. (2012) Community Space, Community Activism: Lessons learned from Sesame Street.

*Smart Communities Civic Change in your Community and Beyond*

*http://smartcommunities.typepad.com*

*The article discusses how tying community engagement to the ideology built around Sesame St.*

*Engaging and connecting youth early with the knowledge of a sense of community around them,*

*grounds them and offers a healthier happier environment for their development overall.*

Toronto Report Card of children. http://www.toronto.ca/reportcardonchildren/

*This report examines the well-being of the Toronto's city children. Mapping demographics and a*

*variety of other indicators that relate to child health and well-being, indicate how children are*

*doing across Toronto's diverse communities.*

Similar Organizations /Programs

http://cityrepair.org/how-to/placemaking/

*An organization works with communities and local artist to take backspaces and make the places*

*engaged by the community; building strong communities along the way.*

http://www.generationon.org/

*Generationon is a global youth organization who inspires, equip, and help to mobilize youth to*

*take action that changes the world and the youth through their service initiatives.*

http://www.groundwork.org.uk/who-we-are.aspx

*A UK base organization that focus on youth involvement and their community through active programs*

http://maximumcity.ca/contact

*Is a non-profit organization helping to educate youth through engaged teaching and understanding of how things are built planned and governed in their city. Josh Fullan a teacher at University of Toronto Schools and the director of Jane's Walk school edition runs the program.*

http://murmur.info/

*Murmur is an oral history project that has collected significant historical facts about specific location within a selection of cities.*

http://popupcity.net/2012/01/top-10-trends-for-2012/

*A great site that explores and posts current information about things happening and shaping the future of cities around the world*

http://urbancodemakers.net/blog/#

*This site is where communities interact physically and virtually through an urban code game to help with the City of Melbourne urban policies. The site is a bit vague and does not inform of any outcome but the overall approach is an interesting current method for community policy engagement*

https://www.wickedproblems.com/

*Good base information for general knowledge on any MRP*

http://www.whaiwhai.com/en/

*This web site is an urban story game played in the physical city you chose to explore. The stories collected are from the urbanlore over time within the city.*

## <u>APPENDIX – A:  Primary Research Design</u>

### *Establishing Research Parameters*

How exploratory play and narrative storytelling could be used as means to engage and connect young citizens (5-11) with a sense of community understanding to the places within their urban neighbourhood. As previously stated, this research paper is to examine a strategy from the bottom-up. Using an exploratory neighbourhood walk as a vehicle to engage and connect with young citizens is a response to current and predicted issues, challenges and opportunities that Toronto faces in its unique and rapidly evolving urban reality as a diverse international city. The goal of this research paper is to illustrate how using a natural learning vehicle within children's repertoire (play-based exploration and narrative story telling) might address the disconnection children have with their community, and in turn, offer a mechanism for open sourced community connection.

This research paper is exploratory in nature. It is qualitative, not quantitative. It is meant to look into what *could be* rather than attempting to be statistically representative of the needs of an entire community. The primary research was designed to act as a platform to build urban awareness with young citizens. To attain this research, observations of the Jane's Walk Junior 2012 were conducted through ethnographic frame works of A(x4) Model (Atmosphere, Actors, Artifacts, Activities) and A.E.I.O.U+T (Activities, Environment, Interactions, Objects, Users' and Time). A(x4) is a multipurpose and multidisciplinary framework featuring four phases: facts & observations, snapshots, visualizations and scenarios (Rothstein, 2001). 'A.E.I.O.U.+T' was also used as the main methods to apply some structure to the collection of the observations, breaking the observations down into smaller, more manageable knowable parcels of information for

analysis, and in providing a framework for presenting findings (Wasson, 2000). Breaking the observations into the categories noted above is a meaningful fast way to give structure to the observation collected. The observations collected from the walk in both the A(x4) and the AEIOUT are detailed at the end of the research paper in the Appendix A.

### Expected outcome

As this research was exploratory in nature, no specific responses were predicted. Instead, the expected outcome was an in-depth understanding of:

- How young citizens currently see their urban spaces without influences or educational references.
- How young citizens currently explore these places, which are presented, to them.
- What young citizens look for from the urban spaces that they explore?

By obtaining these observations, the experiences could be analyzed and interpreted to see the challenges young citizens face when exposed to urban spaces not within their familiar repertoire of places, while seeing how better to engage and communicate a sense of place within their urban community.

### A.E.I.O.U.T Field Observations – Observations from Jane's Walk Junior

On May 5th, 2012, Kirkor Architects and Planners (KA+P) orchestrated the second Jane's Walk. Leading children and their families through the districts of Old Toronto to the financial towers of Bay Street, this walk introduced children and their families to the 'wall' of buildings, which create the Toronto downtown core. The intention was not to explore children's reaction to the monumental buildings of downtown, but to understand if they could find a spirit of play, adventure, and exploration in the public squares, both interior and exterior, which permeate these downtown areas. The essential question: in these squares of the highest architectural design, lauded publicly as the cornerstone of Toronto civic planning, was there a place for children to just be children.

The morning started with 15 children and their parents (in most cases both parents were present) arriving at the starting place of Berczy Park which (intersection of Front and Jarvis Streets). Each child was handed out an exploration bags (design probe kits). These bags contained:

| | |
|---|---|
| a colouring book map of the walk tour; | 1 combined pencil sharpener and eraser |
| 2 sketch pens; | 2 large 'googly' eyes (40mm dia.) |
| 4 coloured graphite pencils; | sketchbook |
| 2 graphite pencils | camera |
| Jane Jacobs large round glasses | |

The purpose of the supplies were for the participants to become active urban observers, writing words or drawing pictures of what they saw and how they felt about the places that the tour took them on. The glasses were intended as an imagination prop offering a lens through which to see the world as would Jane Jacobs. The googly eyes were a fun mechanism whereby participants could paste them on just about anything along the walk, bringing to imaginary life and a sense of character the recipient of these very limited prizes.

The camera was for use at the discretion of the young participants, to see what the young participants found interesting enough to preserve on the film of the camera, ultimately for their scrapbooks but more importantly for a virtual collage of the days travels to be posted online for all to share.

*Analysis and Research Findings:*

The data collected in the primary research component included the A(x4) and A.E.I.O.U+T observations, expert interview discussions, Jane's Walk Junior participant responses to interview questions, and with comparative community youth programs. This data alone is essentially irrelevant until organized and presented in a way that allows analysts to see patterns and the key themes emerging, the data alone lacks any power to inform on its own.



(Image 10: Jane's Walk Junior Route)

*Jane's walk Jr. Observation Summaries, A(x4)*

The data below is an analysis of the Jane's Walk Junior 2012 observations using the A(x4) method. The walk ran a total of one and a half hours starting at nine am in the morning on May 5th, 2012. The Walk started at ① Berczy Park heading west toward the hockey hall of fame, into the ② Allen Lambert Galleria down into the PATH towards the historical ③ Royal York Hotel out into the ④ TD Plaza continuing to the final stop at the ⑤ Roy Thompson plaza (seen on the route map above, image #02).

*Actors*

- 15 children, ages between (5-11) 8 girls, 7 boys
- 17 Parents / Adults (including Walk hosts)
- Canadian, West Indies, South East Asian

*Artifacts*

- Exploration bags (design probe kits containing – coloured pencils, eraser, pen, sketch pad, googly eyes, map, disposable camera and Jane Jacobs glasses)

- The 5 landmarks along the walk

- Importance of the exploration bags where tools for the participants to take notes, sketch, draw the thing that they found, saw and interested them

- The importance of the landmarks were to explore, public, private, paths, sculpture, architecture and the spaces with the places that were along the walk

- The walk animators (hosts/guides) give a general narrative about the history of each landmark stop, just enough to create a visual connection.

*Atmosphere*



(Image 11: Google Map of Berczy Park)

Berczy Park was built in honour of William Berczy in the 1970's; he was one of the founding active citizens that built part of the city.

(Image 12: Interior of Allen Lambert Galleria)

The BCE Atrium connects four buildings in the heart of the financial district in Toronto with a structural canopy, which resembles a tree-lined avenue. BCE Atrium was part of an international competition won by Spanish Architect Santiago Caltrava in 1992.



(Image 13: Concourse to Royal York)

The concourse or PATH system, connects the Allen Lambert Galleria with the Royal York Hotel, is the largest underground shopping complex in the world at 28km.



(Image 14: Royal York Hotel)

The Royal York Hotel is a historical landmark directly across from the main railway station in the heart of Toronto. The Royal York Hotel built in 1927 in the Chateau-style; it was the tallest building of its time.

(Image 15: TD Plaza)

The TD Plaza known is home to Toronto's first large-scale public outdoor space within the urban core. Known as "The Pasture" sculptor Joe Fafard's has placed seven lifelike bronze cows throughout the grassy field.



(Image 16: David Pecaut Square)

Formerly known as Metro Square this plaza built in 1992, recently renamed Pecaut Square in 2011 to honour the late civic leader David Pecaut. The plaza features Canadian sculptor Bernie Miller's *"The Poet, The Fever Hospital"*. The title refers to the poet Isabella Crawford who lived in a house on the site and for the fever hospitals, which stood at the northeast corner of the site.

http://www.flickr.com/photos/91713006@N00/6066763142/sizes/m/in/photostream/

*Activities*

The activities that took place during the walk of five Financial District landmarks described in the previous chapter were the used a puppet named "Eddie" as an ice breaker intended to connect at the children's level. Loot bags where handed out to all the child participant with pens, pencils, sketch book and disposable camera, and a colouring book poster of the walking tour.

The walk was a slow procession from one landmark to the other, from the exterior to the interior and outside again.  The observations collected be the children were simple notes and a few drawings, as the animator explained historical aspects of the stops or features of interest. The variety of ages played a part in how and what the children observed and found interesting throughout the walk. There was no difference in observation or interest level from outside landmarks to inside landmarks.

The children were keen participants throughout the walk, asking Eddy, the animator and their adult companions' questions about things that they saw and observed. Some of the younger children had a hard time staying interested during the walking portion, but all the children where active and keen at each landmark observation.

The day's events ended at an active landmark which all the children felt compelled to climb and engage with.

### A.E.I.O.U+T

The data below is an analysis of the Jane's Walk Junior 2012 observations through the A.E.I.O.U+T method. As noted above in the A(x4) method the walk started at Berczy Park as the first of five stops heading west through the Financial District of downtown Toronto. It ran approximately one and half-hours for 15 children and 17 adult participants.

There were three stops that were in outdoor spaces and two stops, which were indoor spaces. It is interesting to see that the children participants did not change their tone or behaviour from outside to inside. They continued with their questions and observations from the outside spaces to the inside spaces seamlessly. The feeling of moving from outside to inside to underground back to the outside was not a concern or mood changer. As a research observer, I found that

physical spatial constraints around the children were not a point of interest; that one space to another was just a different space for observation. This is important to note since the feeling of being outside is different than inside.

The stories that Eddy the puppet told about the spaces drew their attention; the children were quite comfortable to ask Eddy or their parent questions about the space. The children liked hearing the stories about the space both past and present, as well as some of the visual imagery references. These narrations and exploratory play seemed to get the children discussing more ideas and images about what the space could be.

The children drew and noted their most interesting observations within their sketchpads. The younger participants drew more while the older participants took more simple notes. The questions that were most asked were – "Did people live in these buildings? What is this space for?"

The disposable cameras were a great tool for the children to use as their own method of observation. Most children at the ages of the participants don`t own their own camera. They were excited to be able to document their own observations through these cameras. Most of the younger children took pictures at their level or below. The older children (who may have had more camera experience) took pictures from far away and up at the buildings above.

The googly eyes where loved, adding eyes to almost any object; it felt that these items then become really part of a live landscape. The most popular objects to receive googly eyes where the following; fire hydrants, trees, and man hole covers. The children had no inhabitations to add the googly eyes to city property, the fact that they were supplied with the googly eyes to use was all that they needed to place them on an item.

As observers of the walk in which we did not design or implement, we found the following elements of the walk where modification could be made to improve for future similar walks -

1. **Length of pause time**

   The length of observation time at each location was too quick for the children participating in the event. The children were very interested in the spaces and before they had even gotten much drawn or observed they were moving along to the next space.

2. **Number of Places**

   Five spots within a 1.5km over one and a half hour time, with no real breaks seemed to be too much for the children to observe. One participant noted - more time spent at one place to observe and take note of what was around.

3. **Loudspeaker**

   On the Jane`s Walk web site there are guides for walk leaders to help them execute their walk the best way possible. One of the suggestions is a microphone or megaphone, this addition would have helped focus the children on the stories and allow all to hear.

The positive outcomes from the walk observations are as follows:

a. **Eddy the puppet**

   Having Eddy along as the assistant to the walk animator was an icebreaker for the children. It enabled the children to speak to Eddy and ask many questions vs. asking an adult which they didn`t.

b. **Loot Bags**

As researchers, we designate these party loot bags as design probes or cultural probes but whatever their name is, they were a successful part of the walk. The children received something special that was their own to help them make observation and keep a record of their walk, gave them a memory. As noted in the community spirit section this memory helps ground their spirit to the event creating a sense of understanding and connection to the spaces that they explored.

c. **Outside / Inside spaces**

The ability to have the walk go from outside to inside to sublevel and back up and outside again gave the children an interesting perspective on public places. Typically not seen as public places to explore the walk allowed the children to see how there is a connection from the outside public space to an inside public space and that Toronto has a great tunnel system which allows for this exploration internally and externally of the urban centre.

The results from the walk observations, overall a positive outcome. The young participants enjoyed the walk with their adult companions finding new things to explore and observe. None of the participants seemed unsure of the place or uncomfortable with the walk and stopping places. All participants enjoyed the stories communicated. Each story built on the bases of similar stories adding to the overall exploration of the walk.

Interpreting the observations of the walk with peers and family, helped solidify the comfort children have in their urban spaces and confidence with their environment.

*Berczy Park*

| | Activities | Environments | Interactions | Objects | Users | Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Activities** | cultural probe kits, camera, taking pictures of the space<br><br>learning, kids explore the space<br><br>kids taking photos, videos with digital cameras, ipod touches | photo taking at tall buildings | storytelling about the location's history (St. Lawerence Market)<br><br>storyteller asking kids questions | storytelling puppet<br><br>playing w/ cameras | laughing from storytelling<br><br>storytelling instructing kids about walk<br><br>reminding them to take photos along the walk | |
| **Environments** | not too much interaction standing still looking where ever Eddy direction photo taking pictures of their loots | sunny, outdoor, park, surronded by buildings<br><br>light breeze, pigeons, public, urban<br><br>water fountain nearby<br><br>park | leaning on railings, jumping up on curbs, running, taking pictures | touching trees, pavement, picking up stuff off the ground, rocks, leaves | some kids lagging behind<br><br>some stopping to take pictures of flowers looking up at tall buildings | |
| **Interactions** | kids engaged with<br><br>their photo packages, winding camera | taking pictures of buildings while walking | parents & kids kids asking parents questions<br><br>storyteller talking to kids | | kids looking around at the environment + huddled around storyteller looking through cameras to explore space | |
| **Objects** | kids curious looking into cultural probe bags | | walking and looking, stopping to take pictures | cultural probe kits<br><br>concrete, benches waterfountain trees, grass, pigeons flatiron building | | |
| **Users** | moms reminding kids they have limited photo exposires | kids picking noses people moving through to next destination<br><br>hard to hear instructions w/ road & construction noises<br><br>group splitting as kids take different directions to explore slowly. Kids walking with parents. Kids taking photos of fountain | kids asking parents how to use cameras<br><br>relating to map & space; kids egar to see where they are on the map | kids walking storytelling through a digital device while video recording | parents/kids urban photographers<br><br>dog | |
| **Time** | | | | | | Saturday morning 9:00am May 5th, 2012<br><br>actively looking first down with more questions and talking |

*BCE Building*

| | Activities | Environments | Interactions | Objects | Users | Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Activities** | kids looking around<br><br>parents watching storyteller<br><br>kids sitting in the floor with pencils & pads of paper<br><br>what is this space for? Hockey<br>looks like? Looks like a train station | stroytelling about<br><br>the BCE Place architecture asking questions with analogies to what kidsmight know - secret passage, palm trees, whale, cave, bridge | | | parents taking photos<br><br>kids taking photos of hockey player posters kids mimicking other kids taking animal photos | |
| **Environments** | | marche's bar music indoor fountain looking @ ceiling, openspace restaurant | | | | |
| **Interactions** | | | storyteller telling stories<br>like sharing their answers<br>respond to suggestions of what the space looks like<br>few kids are writing in their books | storytelling pointing to map to captivate kids attention | kids asking what now she can see<br>mom explains it an old (film) camera | |
| **Objects** | | | | name tags on facilitator<br>name tag on puppet jane's walk map walkways, hallways sculptures, open ceilings<br>big structures escalators | cameras are held with both hands<br>parents - messanger bags/purses holding cultural probe kits<br><br>DSLR's | |
| **Users** | sitting down & drawing<br><br>looking @ map<br><br>older are more confident in writing in their books | kids taking photos veiwing upwards/<br><br>above eye level mom explaining history stores behind, engaging kids to touch kids chewing gum | | kids trying to see where they can see pictures, film camera<br><br>storyteller refers to map for directions kids all have maps out<br><br>touching ad boards | parents lifting kids up to touch things 20 kids & 15 parents<br><br>not really engaging with each other, w/ parents | |
| **Time** | | | | | kids are need some time to do things, on the go quickly<br><br>taking time to move, slow down | no clocks<br>no sense of time kids starting to loose interest in listening, winding cameras, playing w/ contents in bag |

*Royal York Hotel*

| | Activities | Environments | Interactions | Objects | Users | Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Activities** | looking for clues<br><br>dad pointing to tell<br><br>building saying " I used to work on the ___th floorof that building to kids<br>is this public or private space, kids asked to observe doors<br>asked if this is a good hotel por people coming from train station | kids crawling on floor<br>mom taking photo up the staircase at the clock tower | revolving doors<br><br>kids being scarded to go through | kids sharing their cameras<br><br>things look smaller through the camera | we're under the building right now asking kids if it's a public or private place (it's public) | |
| **Environments** | | stores, coffee owner, biz district, food court w/ McDonalds, camera flashing<br><br>underground pathway<br>escalator sounds<br>hotel shops | excited to use escalators | | kids walking in a dispersed line<br>earlier it was a leading clump & some laggers | |
| **Interactions** | | spiral staircase<br><br>outdoors, kids look up @ buildings, they become a little louder | storytelling<br><br>photo taking<br><br>following leaders, follow pathway to go upstairs | crossing road, holding parent hands and crossing<br><br>taking pictures of sculptures<br><br>what of buildings | mom saying to kids "this is where the queen of england stays" | |
| **Objects** | | chairs, carpet, sitting area | looking into window displays<br>pointing @ sculptures<br>running on carpet<br><br>long corridor, hallway | clock tower, plants, signs, ads, dogs<br><br>small tiles on floor<br><br>iphone of parents<br>sweaters ties around waist<br>winding staircase | kids placing goggley eyes on statue<br><br>cyclops lions<br>kids delighted to go through revolving doors<br>need more time | |
| **Users** | kids leaning on parents | looking around @ shops<br>pointing @ clock<br>liking the space, they would want ot stay here | storyteller asking kids why people stay at the hotel<br>built in 1929<br><br>how long did take to paint?<br><br>explaining Union station is across the street<br>taking pictures of clock<br>taking pictures of stores, diplay windows, old chess set | kids photographing flowers<br><br>kids holding maps<br>kids taking photos of flower arrangements<br><br>kids taking photos of each other<br><br>nosiy<br><br>kids like escalator, sculptures; touch sculpter | some kids are excited, some hesitant<br>dogs looking at people | |
| **Time** | | | | | some kids are starting look tired leaning on parents not listening | 10:45am |

*TD Plaza*

| | Activities | Environments | Interactions | Objects | Users | Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Activities** | jwalking across<br><br>Wellington<br><br>kids running, kids tired<br>kids losing hats in the wind<br><br>do people live in the buildings? Kids understand it is a work building | | | | kids on the last pictures<br><br>kids asking for help to take photo's of statue<br>kidswalking over subway grates<br>kids saying "awesome" when climbing outdoor sculptures | |
| **Environments** | | cold, cloudy, windy space, in between the buildings<br><br>grass<br>cows<br>teens<br>skatboarding<br>benches | kids walking along ledge beside sidewalk along bushes | | | |
| **Interactions** | | | kids climbing on statues<br>kids poising for photos | kids pointing to glass sculptures<br><br>asking what it is | | |
| **Objects** | | | | eyes on trees<br>eyes on cows<br>kids putting googly eyes on everthing<br><br>kids sliding on & off cows<br><br>fire hydrants | kids sitting on cows writing on pads<br><br>riding cows<br><br>parents riding behind kids on cows | |
| **Users** | taking googly eyes and sticking them on somethings | kids stomping through puddles | kids holding parents hands<br>motivating kids to get things from bags to take pictures<br>googly eyes on Scotia Bank poster | kids automaticly saw cows and went running ro climb on top, riding the cows<br><br>taking oictures of them<br>hussing cows<br><br>touching fire hydrants<br><br>sticking eyes | | |
| **Time** | | | | | running, climbing stopping & drawing on bench | |

*Roy Thompson Hall*

| | Activities | Environments | Interactions | Objects | Users | Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Activities** | kids whining & crying<br>asking for cameras back<br>asking kids which stop they liked most<br><br>look for last clueof public and private space<br>take more pictures next year again | | | | | |
| **Environments** | | open space<br>glass buildings<br>water park<br>fountain<br>nosiy roads<br>pine trees | | homeless person<br>skateboarders<br>riding around | | |
| **Interactions** | | | group photo | kids climbing the sculpture, stepping on loose tiles, making sounds, game by stepping on the tiles to make sounds<br><br>clipboard stroytelling | | |
| **Objects** | | big grass in the concrete pathway<br>public benches | stepping on tiles, walking around sculpture area, jumping off benches, steps, running around in space | volunteers collecting cameras<br>sculpure | | |
| **Users** | | taking pictures of buildings | kids think it's beautiful<br><br>they like he space | kids placing googly eyes on for photos<br>kids staring at homeless person, ask parents why<br>they sleep on the ground<br>standing on concrete ledge to take pictures, look at fountain below | smiling kids & parents smiling, enjoying time at the space and walking around<br>kids really enjoy having their pictures taken, even requesting to have their pictures taken | |
| **Time** | overall not enough given to each space to enjoy & take down notes to exlpore the space | | | | | distracted with climbing on sculpties and not listening as much |

## APPENDIX – B: Jane's Walk Junior Participant Interview Questions and Findings

*Interview Questions – Public Play to shape urban spaces*

The intent of the following questions is to answer the following primary research question – How might exploratory play and storytelling be used as a creative process to foster a sense of community pride among young citizens? With a secondary research question - Why is it important to get young citizens involved in community bonding events like the Jane's Walk Jr.?

1. What is your age?
2. What was the best space that you saw on the Jane's walk?
3. Why was this, the best space during the Jane's walk?
4. How do you explore new places?
5. How do you create the games that you play?
6. What games could be used to help children explore the city?
7. What was the best part of the Jane's walk?
8. Do you come into the city a lot?
9. What other events do you and your family attend in the city?
10. What are the reasons you come to the city?
11. Do you have a favourite place in the city that you like to visit?
12. Why is this place your favourite?
13. Could you describe what makes is a city?
14. Where is your favourite place to play?
15. Why is this place your favourite?
16. What story could you tell to other children about your favourite place in the city?
17. Would you like to go on another Jane's Walk next year?
18. What part of the city would you explore on a Jane's walk?
19. What things would you take on your walk to help you explore?
20. Whom would you take on this walk?

*Interview Summaries and Findings*

The expert interviews were conducted with the organizers of the Jane's Walk Junior 2012, and a variety of experts connected with young urban awareness community programs. After extensive discussions with the experts in a conversation style interview key elements emerged. The focus of the conversations were based on their experiences and knowledge of youth engagement programs within Toronto's communities; why this is currently relevant, their understanding of how play-based exploration is an engagement mechanism, and how this is currently working within their realm.

The key themes emerging from the discussion are categorized as:

- Stories connect and engage young citizens to the world around them

- Confidence and self-awareness

- Character development

- Building resilience

- Play builds trust

- Play is fluid

The interviews with the children participants where a structured 20 question interview style (refer to Appendix B). It was hard for the 5 to 6 to understand and answer the questions, the 7 to 11 where quite confident about their memory of the walk. The older participants had many descriptive memories and enjoyed explaining these memories. It was clear from the interviews that all the participants enjoyed the walk, would like to take part in another walk in the center of the city; for the liked to explore and play in a place they don't typically go to everyday.

<u>**APPENDIX – C:  Junior Urban Explorer Kit**</u>

The kit is a compilation of tools used to aid children's observations, focusing their view and recording their stories. The idea of the urban explorer kit, as I worked with Kirkor to first be introduced during the Jane's Walk Junior, is the result of a my direct extrapolation of a design probes kits as it may be applied against what children may want to use during their walk.  The final kit, presented as part of this research, is the refinement of the tools building on the suggestion offered by the children interviewed after their Jane's Walk.  Each kit will be made up of the following tools :

- **1, classic yellow HB school pencil**

    The use of a classic school pencil, is familiar to a child as a tool used for note taking.  The ability for a child to take observational notes within the lined memo pad, helps them keep their observation as a true explorer would.  This gives them a sense of adult like connection through imagining they could be real explorers on the search for the biggest tree or bluest bird; building on the imagination of stories and play.

- **4, coloured ink pens**

    Similar in familiarity as with the pencil, four coloured pens are provided to encourage marking up thoughts and ideas similar as teachers. Used also for colouring in the pictures they draw as observation along their exploration walk.  Only four colours have been selected.  This is so that the children walk participants are not overwhelmed with too many choices, and ensures that mom and dad are not constantly picking up an array of twelve or fifteen pens from the ground.  The selection of colours is both specific to colours we might see in our immediate environment, but are of an intensity to be attractive to children.  For the purpose of this kit, the following colours were included:

✓ red ✓ blue

✓ orange ✓ green

Coloured ink pens have replaced the coloured pencils in the Kirkor prototype. It was noted with the prototype that pencils, frequently broken, were awkward for the children to sharpen while trying to complete other aspects of their exploration. Further, it pressured them for time in the short visits at each destination. Adults often needed to step in to assist, and this reliance took away from their own sense of adventure.

- **1, pencil sharpener and gum eraser**

  This is an obvious necessity when working with children, pencil, and rapid ideas: leads break, ideas change, and the walk must go on.

- **1, Black, felt-tipped pen**

  Sometimes, one just needs a hard black line. As an accent to a drawing, a hard-line to indicate that the time for further thinking and sketching is now complete, or to simply write down notes, a felt tipped pen can commit lines through coloured marker as required.

- **1, Small, coiled notepad/sketchbook, recycled paper**

  Not only is this a place to record what our explorers see, and record their impression or smell of a place, this is an important keepsake for children to take home. If dedicated to the use of urban observation, it can be an important catalyst for urban awareness. This journal that can be pulled out time and again, on travels with family and friends, to record their perceptions (either in word and/or sketch) of the places they pass through and visit. The glue-bond sketchbook has been changed from the original Kirkor prototype to a coiled note book, providing the ability to fully open and use the entire page. It was found that glue-bond sketch books also easily flipped back to be closed, and was hard for a child to keep pressed open while sketching.

- **1, Small Clipboard**

    This helps to keep many paper pieces of the kit from being too scattered, and offers a temporary desk on which to work as the need arises.

- **1, Small Magnifying Glass, Jane's Jacobs' wide-rimmed play glasses, and one small compass**

    These items are not significant in so much as they provide ways to document urban perceptions, but are important for children to further inspire a sense of play in their explorations.  The glasses are a reminder of how these walks came to be, why they are important, and an invitation to the child to be like Mrs. Jacobs in her efforts to make our neighbourhoods better.

- **Variety of Small Stickers**

    These stickers are colourful exclamations or bookmarks, which can be easily understood by children, to help aid memory of the walk.

- **1, Set of 15 Postcards**

    This book of fifteen postcards have on them doodles, with light-hearted captions prompting the child to look a little deeper, a little further 'beyond' in their explorations of a space.  The questions are geared to be as if the space is speaking to them directly, asking questions like "what is missing from this park" or "what would look good in the pond?"  The art, although not directly representative of the real space before them, is but a playful suggestion to our explorers that "what if" there was a park or pond in the middle of this road?  The very notion may not ever be possible, but the idea itself may be that catalyst to start a new, open conversation between the explorer and their adult companions and peers. The doodles, together with their captions, invite our explorers to take their time at a place, to enjoy it while they just sit and draw on the postcard.  If it is a continuation of the crazy idea proposed in the caption, or just a sketch on a piece of paper sharing the doodle but without reference, is not important.

The idea is to offer our explorers a canvas to create a story, one which is easily mailed to a friend, teacher, or distant family member.  They represent the beginning of a storytelling, about a place they have seen and what they learned about it. This interest in the findings of our explorer validates their curiosity as reported in the observations, and may lead them to continue to look for more great stories to share.

- **3, Small Sticks of Coloured Chalk**

  The chalk is a new addition to the Urban Explorer Kit.  Chalk has long since moved from the classroom to become the defacto marker of play. In the streets in front of our explorer's home, the lines of game in our explorer's playgrounds, and on the walls of spaces familiar to our explorer's, chalk is one of the most accessible and temporary tools for expression by children.  However, when children are offered an opportunity to mark a space unfamiliar to them, this free-flowing action changes.  Their chalk art becomes an extension of the explorer's observations, the message they leave behind becomes more important to the children as it will likely reflect a message they want to share the others who pass over it.  Essentially, the children can purposefully begin to tell a story about this space, one which may be passed on to others not related to the walk.  And although the story may never be recognized in the way our explorers intend, the idea that our explorers have contributed to a story which may grow greater still is inspiring and deep-rooted.  The great thing of chalk is that it is washed away, but the notion in our explorer's minds and imaginations that they have contributed a very real statement to the greater neighbourhood represent a sense of place.

- **2, Large 'Googly' Eyes, self-adhering**

  These plastic domed white eyes with free-fall black discs inside, are those same eyes of Sesame Street's much-beloved cookie eating blue monster.  The eyes are 40mm (1 ½") in diameter and are provided with a light adhesive backing, ensuring no surfaces are damaged once the eyes are affixed and then need to be removed, either by the children themselves or confused custodial

staff cleaning up at a day's end.  Only two are provided.  It was observed on Jane's Walk Junior

that, when more than two were provided, the installation of these eyes became a larger

distraction from the intent of the walk itself, and the eyes appeared everywhere losing their

specialness. The eyes, in keeping with the theme of the importance of observation, are to be

considered treasures, and used only at that 'perfect' time as recognized by each of the explorers.

Virtually anything can be given eyes, and in doing so, anything is given a personality.  The eyes

immediately introduce an element of purely playful silliness to the day's travels, and in this

silliness barriers are brought down.  Whether this is an awkwardness between new friends

undertaking this walk together for the first time, or strangers entirely removed from participating

in the walk, nearly everyone wants to share in the fun.

There is a lasting effect on these eyes as well, unbeknownst to the children who gave them life.

Eyes left behind are noticed by others, unaware as to who may have left them, what their

purpose is, why they are stuck to that specific sculpture, and so on.  They represent a silly

anomaly in the spaces.  And in these anomalies, and the seeds of new stories, belonging to

others, are started.

- **1, Canvas explorer bag**

   This small canvas bag is designed to attach to  a belt allowing hands free exploration, and easy

   washing. It has a special pouch on the back to hold the clip board and the reference pamphlet for

   quick easy access.  The intent is for the junior explorer to be as independent with all their

   explorer tools.  In this way, our explorer's adult companions are not (entirely) responsible for the

   kit, allowing a more free engagement with their children on their walk. Giving the junior explorer

   free access to their tools not prompted by their adult companions, allows the observation and

   exploration to be self-directed.

- **1, Reference guide**

    The fold out reference guide has been designed to fit exactly within the size of the clipboard size, making it easier for little hands to manage on their own. Each fold-out face of the guide has a specific purpose, and the layout of the folds allows for reading one face at a time (without having to open the entire guide). The first three faces explain to both adult companions and junior explorers the purpose of the tools and how they might be used. On the backside, one of the faces offers clues in images and captions as to what our explorer's might look for on their first walk. Whenever one starts something new, it is often more instructive to be offered an example to help start the adventure off. Once familiar & confident with the tools; the kit could be used be used in a variety of ways as the user sees fit

    The next face helps ensure that the explorer is headed off on a safe walk, providing tips to ensure that all explorers are protected for a variety of weather conditions. The last two rear faces are a log section to keep track of the different adventures, time, date and location.

    +                              +                              +

The junior urban explorer kit can be used, shared and built upon with family, extended family, group parties, classroom activity, community group events, or as used by planners to explore deeper insights as to how a neighbourhood observes their spaces.

**APPENDIX – D:  Previous Comparable Research – Similar Programs**

*Maximum City*

Maximum City it a Toronto educational pilot based program focused on the urban literacy of middle school students, with prime interests in architecture, design, transit, city hall, sustainability, and urban planning. The vision Maximum City set out is that young people should have a voice to contribute to the changing shape of the city around them. These youth are the future urbanists of their city with keen insight, creative risk taking and a fresh perspective they are eager to gain an understanding of how a city runs, is built, planned, and governed all taught by leading experts within the city.

Josh Fullan a teacher at University of Toronto Schools and the director of Jane's Walk school edition runs the Maximum City program within Toronto. The program is broken down into ten modules; Built City, Cyclist City, Planned City, Liveable City, Park City, Pedestrian City, Transit City, Governed City, Engaged City, Smart City. Each of the modules, which are approximately a half-day session, has a specific focus and outcome based on its theme. The outcome is to engage and instill urban awareness to the youths participating within the program, hopefully giving them the knowledge and skills to be active in the city that they live.

Through an observation of this year's Pedestrian and Cycle City module, I was able to see a how the youth and the facilitator connected and shared their knowledge and understanding on what a pedestrian and cycle city meant to the youth. Both facilitators started asking the youth what their understanding of a pedestrian and cycle city meant to them. Then the discussion moved to how they felt Toronto performed at meeting their needs. From this simple groundwork, the facilitator spoke about other cities internationally that where similar to the examples the youth mentioned. From that, point of discussion, the facilitator took the youth out on a walking tour of a one-block radius from the program building. This one block walk took up an hour of time as the youth and facilitator discussed and broke down the

elements through observation of the block radius walk. I was not able to participate on the cycle tour but would presume that the outcomes where similar.

When the youth and facilitator returned, the youth were asked to draw a map of a walk that they do every day. Once the maps where drawn the youth, in small groups, shared their maps, the stories that came from the explanation of their walking map were enlightening. Most maps were of their walk to school or a local park. They not only described the objects and landmarks on the walk but also the traffic, both pedestrian and vehicle and where it was safe to walk on one side or the other side.

The observation of the two modules showed the need for and interest in engaging youth in greater urban community awareness. It built stories between each participant and facilitator to understand, empathise, and share possible options to inform a stronger pedestrian and cycle city future.

Student testaments from the 2011 program -

*"I want to incorporate as much as I learned in the [program] into my daily life and try to educate others about the importance of urban planning, starting with my parents."*

*"I now believe that urban issues are much more serious than I thought before. Simple problems such as transit delays or sidewalk widths affect more people than I could imagine, and I highly respect those who wish to solve these problems."*

### City Repair

City Repair is a Portland Oregon based organization that educates and inspires communities to transform the places where they live through artistic and ecologically oriented action events. The projects honour the interconnection of human communities and the natural world through placemaking.

*"The City Repair Project was established to return these important places of communication and participation to our neighbourhoods. At City Repair, we see that sustainable communities are*

*built when people work together for mutual benefit. We create and facilitate prototype gathering spaces that can inspire any community to create their own places of gathering."*

Placemaking is a multi-layered process in which citizens foster active, engaged relationships with the spaces and, landscapes, and shape those places in a way, which creates a sense of communal engagement. This creative reclamation of public space accomplished improvements in the form of benches on street corners, kiosks on sidewalks for neighbours to post information, and street paintings in the public right-of-way. These projects are undertaken by the local communities coming together to discuss what it is they want , what elements are lacking, and how the community can work together with the resources they have to create their own place within the space.

City Repair's foundation of placemaking theory is increasingly becoming part of planning strategies as tool to bridge professionals and people's views, thus providing an alliance between disciplinary and non-disciplinary factors.[49]

### *Pop-Up City*

Pop-Up City is a blog that focuses its exploration on the latest trends, ideas, and design regarding the city of the future. They post new concepts, strategies, and methods for a dynamic and flexible interpretation of current and future urban life.

The world of today's cities deal with many more problems related to a rapidly increasing international societal, cultural, technologic, and economic transformation processes. With an increased uncertainty in a city's economic sustainability, and political unrest leads to expectations and renewals of dynamic capacities of the city. Pop-up City's aim is to search for creative solutions regarding flexible urbanism and architecture.

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[49] Castello, L. (2006) City & Time and Places: Bridging the concept of place to urban conservation planning. *City & Time 2 (1): 5*

Founded in 2008, they have become a source of inspiration for a young, innovative, and relevant audience of designers, architects, marketers, urban planners, web professionals, and other creative pioneers seeking strategic foresight information that leads to innovative future city opportunities.

***Urban Code Markers***

Urban Code Markers is a collective of guilds using games through play exploration to inform urban planning processes.

The activities range from community consultation, advising councils on city planning policies, and research into the role of ubiquitous media in shaping urban space. Developing a trans-disciplinary approach to urban design called 'urban code making'. This experimental approach draws upon game design, computational semiotics, and generative systems for urban planning. Urban Code Makers are currently testing this strategy on the streets of Melbourne, Australia – a city known for its unique urban character resulting from a blend of planned and unplanned urban spaces.

There are eight guilds, which represent eight difference disciplines or principles of urban planning as teams. Each guild runs a blog, posting their findings, photos, and resolution of the urban ecosystem that encompassed them.

The City of Melbourne had issued a report banning play within the CBD (central business district) of Melbourne; indicating the risks associated with play where too high for the city. This included not only street & mobile games but the ban also included all board games. A "zero-tolerance" approach had been advocated.

Urban code makers organized a public demonstration against the ban; the same day they launched their urban code game to rezone the city through play. Based on this protest and the data collected from the code game, the city of Melbourne commissioned urban code makers to help develop an urban planning

proposal for the Melbourne 2020 vision and have revoked the urban play ban within the CBD (central business district).

### *Whaiwhai*

Whaiwhai – *"play the storyline through the city"* is the tag line for a multi-dimensional interactive city game.

There are currently six books, cities, and games that can be played within the city or at home; as an individual or as a group. Each city game or story is a collection of many of the city's urban lore wound into a Sherlock Holmes style mystery, where the participant playing within the city can travel through the city and explore off the tourist path historical places that came up the city's stories.

The game is played through text messages on your phone and the clues outlined within the book. The book is a jumble of fractured storylines and not until you get your clues and enter them via text into your phone do, you have a way to find the following clue.
This is an innovative way to connect people to a city getting them to see it just a little differently, through play-based exploration and storytelling.[50]

### *Murmur*

The murmur project is a grassroots memory and audio archive project that began in 2003 in Toronto, which has spread to other cities in Canada and around the world. Murmur records stories about neighbourhoods from long-term residences. These stories range from historical to personal recollection, told from a personal viewpoint. At the physical location of the story, an Ear Sign is installed on a city pole just above eye level with a phone number connecting the listener to the story through a phone line

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[50] http://www.whaiwhai.com/en/

database. When you come across a Murmur Ear calling the number displayed on the sign the story is replayed for you to hear connecting you with the location of the story.

Murmur has recorded stories in eight of Toronto neighbourhoods, from the Junction in the west end to Little India in the east end. Most of the recordings are memories from residents, unfiltered by academic or public historians.

The Murmur group has developed a distinctive map style to host their stories, for those who many not able to venture to the specific neighbourhoods; the data can also be received and replayed off the murmur web site.[51]

### generationOn

generationOn is a global youth service movement empowering kids to make their mark on the world. The parent organization is *Point of Light*, a platform organization that is a leading non-profit volunteer organization, putting people at the centre of transforming their communities.

By collaborating with teachers, parents, schools, community organizations and businesses, generationOn gives kids the opportunity to see firsthand the issues in their communities and the tools and resources they need to respond and become part of the solution.

generationOn was built on the foundation created by Children for Children, a non-profit founded by Silda Wall Spitzer which created opportunities for young people from all backgrounds to *Grow Involved* through volunteering and service-learning programs. Children for Children combined with Points of Light Institute in June 2009 and brought together several other youth service organizations, including the LEAGUE and Learning to Give, to officially become generationOn in October 2010.

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[51] http://murmur.info/

generationOn platform builds opportunities for kids focused for projects, quizzes on how they can build a better community, action maps to help guide them through the process. This platform helps contextualize what is a community and no matter how small you are, you can help build your future community. The participants can share their events, post project photos, and learn of other participants within the program. It is a full body physical and virtual sharing community for kids and teens.[52]

### *Groundwork*

*"Groundwork changing places changing lives"* is the tag line for this organization that focuses on ground change initiatives within the UK. The focus is working with disadvantaged communities to build a society of sustainable communities that are vibrant, healthy, and safe for all.

With community and corporate sponsorships, Groundwork works to create sustainable communities through developing initiatives that cut across economics, social and environmental issues with active community partnership. These programs help build people's skills and improve job prospects , redesigns neglected open spaces; helps communities make their own decisions about their area; motivates and develops young people , and promotes greener ways of living and working.

The program started in the height of the 1980 recession when many traditional industries were on the brink of collapse. Groundwork was developed to act independently from the government as an entrepreneurial team to enable and mobilise community resources building partnerships between the public, private, and voluntary bodies. These programs are developed to fit specifically the needs of each community for the greatest change impact.

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[52] http://www.generationon.org/

Groundwork's is an organization that works on all levels of partnership and community inclusive support in the development for long-term change and awareness with social economic sustainable growth. [53]

### *TVO Givers*

TVO Givers is a joint project between TVOkids and sinking ship entertainment. A thirteen-week part live action series, which engages kids with their local community. The kids work with a lead and group of volunteers to reimage and rebuild a local playground within their community.

The vision behind Givers is to show kids that they can get involved and make a change within their community creating an impact on the space around them. The series is about kid power, work, and collaborating as a team, developing civic engagement, and the importance of working to build the best community.

Working with the Ontario Parks Association, TVO and Sinking Ship Entertainment they put a call out to communities across the province, who may have the greatest need for safer parks and playgrounds to select the right locations featured in the series. More than sixty submissions from across Ontario were received with only thirteen communities being selected for the final cut.

In each community, a team of six kids are selected to be involved. The age ranges from six to twelve. These kids are involved, from developing a creative concept and theme, to drawing up the plans, to the actual tear down and final construction of their new community park. At the end of the three-day event a public launch of the finished parks is revealed to the community with the kids cutting the ribbon.

With this being only a three days project from start to finish, the kids show a great sense of pride with their final accomplishment. Giver was conceived as a way to teach and encourage kids how to become more involved in their local communities fostering a sense of place.

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[53] http://www.groundwork.org.uk/who-we-are.aspx

***Toronto Children's Playworks***

Toronto Children's Playworks is an operating division under the Thinking Forward charity. The focus of

Toronto Children's Playworks designed for interactive exhibits emphasizing hands-on, child-centred

learning approaches to advance their understanding of other cultures, their roles as citizens of the world,

and an appreciation of their unique place within the diverse landscape of Toronto. They believe that play,

allows children the means to engage with, and to shape their world.

"Play is valuable in children's physical exercise and growth and in their development of motor

skills. Children playing together present rich opportunities for social, moral, and emotional

development and hence for the development of their personality and their ability to handle

stress and conflict. It is in free play that children learn to understand and co-operate with

others." (International Play Association)

## APPENDIX – E:  REB approval letter
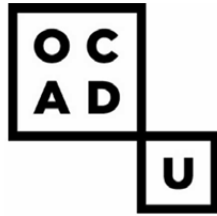
**Research Ethics Board**

July 31, 2012

Dear Laura Fyles,

RE: OCADU65, "An Investigation of Public Play to Shape Urban Spaces"

The OCAD University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named resubmission. The protocol dated July 31, 2012 and the consent form dated July 31, 2012 are approved for use for the next 12 months. If the study is expected to continue beyond the expiry date (July 30, 2013) you are responsible for ensuring the study receives re-approval. Your final approval number is **2012-21.**

Before proceeding with your project, compliance with other required University approvals/certifications, institutional requirements, or governmental authorizations may be required.  It is your responsibility to ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the OCAD U REB prior to the initiation of any research.

If, during the course of the research, there are any serious adverse events, changes in the approved protocol or consent form or any new information that must be considered with respect to the study, these should be brought to the immediate attention of the Board.

The REB must also be notified of the completion or termination of this study and a final report provided.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your project.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Kerr

Chair, OCAD U Research Ethics Board

OCAD U Research Ethics Board: rm 7520c, 205 Richmond Street W, Toronto, ON M5V 1V3
416.977.6000 x474