

Welcoming new neighbors



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City of Holland newsletter:

Visit <https://www.cityofholland.com/872/Sign-Up-for-the-City-E-News-Letter> to sign up to receive Holland's monthly newsletter, which frequently contains updates about neighborhoods.

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This guide was adapted with permission from the document, *Welcoming New Neighbors*, published by the city of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

About this guide

It is easier to feel a sense of belonging when residents form connections with each other. This guide provides tips for welcoming new neighbors and promoting a sense of belonging and connection to their new neighborhood.

Ways to welcome new neighbors

There are a number of ways to welcome new neighbors to your community. Below are some ideas to help you get started.

WAVE AND SAY HELLO

All relationships start with a hello! Make an effort to wave when you see neighbors around the neighborhood and say hello when you see them out and about. Simple greetings can help people to feel at home in their new space.

SPEND TIME OUTSIDE

A great way to meet new neighbors is to spend more time outside! Whether you are going for a walk or hanging out in your front yard, being outside makes it easy to naturally develop new neighborly connections. Say hello, introduce yourself, and exchange contact information if you are comfortable doing so.

WRITE A WELCOME LETTER

A personalized letter or card is a nice way to introduce yourself and provide new neighbors with important information. When creating your welcome letter, consider the following tips:

- Include an enthusiastic and encouraging welcome statement! (Example – “Hi, neighbor! We are so excited to welcome you to the neighborhood.”)
- Introduce yourself (and other members of your household), and personalize the letter by adding some details about you! Consider adding details about some of your interests

and letting your neighbors know if you have kids or pets. Providing some personal information can help you and your neighbors build strong connections and determine what you may have in common.

- Offer to provide assistance and support that you are able and willing to give. For example, if you are a great bike mechanic and are open to helping neighbors fix their bikes, let new neighbors know you are here to help.
- Include contact information if you are comfortable. This will allow new neighbors to follow up with you later.
- Add recommendations for local sights. Consider providing tips on local trails, parks, museums, shops, restaurants, and the farmers market.

DROP OFF A SMALL GIFT

Welcome your new neighbor with a small housewarming present. No matter the size, the thought and effort are what really matter. Here are some ideas to help your brainstorm small welcome gifts:

- A homemade treat. When preparing the dish, make sure to consider allergies and dietary restrictions – include a small note with the ingredients just to be safe.
- A potted flower or plant. New neighbors can use this gift to beautify their new home.
- Herbs or other items from your garden. Certain herb plants can be easily separated and transplanted for neighbors to plant in their new garden. Consider sharing some of your plants with new neighbors if they are interested. Also, if you are harvesting lots of fresh produce from your garden, consider sharing some fruits and vegetables.
- A small gift certificate to a local restaurant or café. Before your neighbors have had a chance to unpack and get settled, cooking can be out of the question. Your recommendation to a great local spot and a small gift certificate can help them find a delicious meal.
- If you live in a multi-unit building, consider developing a building information guide. Think about including details about things like garbage pick-up days, accessing mail and

packages, laundry facilities, common spaces (like gyms), or details on how to access certain amenities (like patios and party rooms). This information can help new neighbors get settled in the building.

REFER NEW RESIDENTS TO IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Moving to a new city comes with many changes. If you live in Neighborhood Connections neighborhood, let your new neighbor know about this group and how to get in contact with them. If that information is not at your fingertips, you can find it on the [Neighborhood Connections webpage](#). Also consider referring new neighbors to the [City of Holland's neighborhoods webpage](#).

INVITE NEW NEIGHBORS TO JOIN ONLINE COMMUNITIES

If your community or neighborhood has a page on social media, an email/text group, or a newsletter, provide new neighbors with the details and encourage them to join. Online communities help new neighbors access important information and build connections.

HOST A NEIGHBORHOOD GET-TOGETHER

Parties and social events are wonderful opportunities to meet new neighbors and develop connections. Organize a neighborhood event or block party and encourage new neighbors to attend. For more information on planning block parties, check out the city's [Block Parties webpage](#).

Also, consider welcoming new neighbors by inviting them over for a meal or asking them to join you at a local restaurant. This can be a nice opportunity to connect with your new neighbors and start building positive relationships.

Other helpful tips

In addition to the welcoming ideas listed above, keep these helpful tips in mind when greeting new neighbors:

- Foster open and honest communication. Often, neighborhood conflict emerges from uncertainty and miscommunication. When new neighbors move in, make an effort to keep them informed about things that are going on in the neighborhood and at your property. If you are planning a renovation that may be noisy or disruptive, let them know. Communicating can help foster a positive relationship.
- Be kind and considerate. New neighbors may not be familiar with city regulations about certain things, like parking. If you notice a neighbor is not following a regulation, reach out, chat about the issue, and explain your concern in a positive and helpful way.
- Be friendly, but not intrusive. Recognize that moving can be stressful! When greeting your new neighbors be conscious of this and give your new neighbors privacy and time to settle in and adjust to their new space.
- Connect early and develop a relationship with new neighbors. Establishing a positive relationship early will be beneficial to both of you.

Thanks for reading this guide and for thinking about how you might play a part in creating a strong neighborhood and a more neighborly city!