

WE ARE PARKDALE!

ORGANIZATION IS POWER.

In Parkdale we organize. It's not always easy but it always works. Our neighbours over at 35 Spencer Ave. are reminding us that people across this neighbourhood face the same old problems: rent increases, pests, bully landlords, and repairs being ignored. They reminded us too that when we organize together against our common problems those problems get better. The more we organize the better things get.

Our neighbours that organized the tutoring program are reminding us about something, too. You don't just organize **AGAINST** things. You organize **FOR** things, as well. A strong neighbourhood doesn't just come together to fight the landlords. A strong neighbourhood also comes together to help and support each other. The more we support each other the stronger our neighbourhood gets. This is no charity or social work program. Everyone in

this neighbourhood should recognize that what helps your neighbours helps your neighbourhood. And what helps your neighbourhood helps you. A strong neighbourhood is built on the trust and respect we build between each other. And that trust and respect is built in many ways. Yes, we organize together when it's time to fight the landlord but we also organize together to help with the day-to-day struggles of our neighbours.

The fights with the landlord are just one part of the day-to-day struggles in this neighbourhood. When we don't have power, the fights are harder and the struggles are tougher. We build that power when we come together and organize. When we organize more and use that power for everyone, we build even more power still. Power is what we want. Organizing is how we get it.

**PARKDALE: ORGANIZE! FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD POWER. READY TO ORGANIZE?
GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD ORGANIZATION: 647-874-8793**



**PARKDALE
ORGANIZE!**

PARKDALEORGANIZE@GMAIL.COM

647-874-8793

This is

Volume 1 Issue 5 - January 2017

PARKDALE

A publication of Parkdale: Organize!

NEIGHBOURS LAUNCH FREE TUTORING PROGRAM DOES YOUR KID NEED HELP WITH SCHOOL? YOUR NEIGHBOURS CAN HELP.

"I like to live in Parkdale because everyone has got each others' backs."

- Student in the Parkdale Organize neighbourhood tutoring program

We take this 10 year-old's expression of love for her neighbourhood as a challenge. If Parkdale is a neighbourhood where neighbours take care of each other then it's up to us to make it so. Hers and thousands of other Parkdale kids' futures depend on it. So just how are we going to support each other?

"If my landlord tries to raise the rent, I'll do the same thing 188 Jameson did but with a bunch of kids."

- 9 year old student in the PO neighbourhood tutoring program

One way we do it is by fighting the landlords. When the landlord raises the rent or refuses to fix things, we organize. When we organize we are stronger. When we're stronger we can improve conditions where we live.

How can we organize when it comes to our kids' education?

We all care very much and sometimes worry about our kids' education. When our kids struggle we often feel like we're to blame. The truth is, the school system can be a difficult one for any student and their parents to find their way in!

To make matters worse most of us work long hours. Many of us are new to Canada and just

learning a new language. All of us have felt like we're alone, but it doesn't have to be that way. The neighbourhood tutoring program shows us how.

Launched in October, the Parkdale Organize neighbourhood tutoring program already has several families involved. Families work with neighbourhood tutors to develop a program that meets the needs of the kids. Students receive help in math, reading, writing, social studies, or any other subject they need.

Students can work on their homework and explore new topics that interest them. Students read, write, have discussions and work on math and science. Most importantly, kids are able to think critically, have fun and build supportive relationships. Students not only learn from adults, but develop their ability to self-educate and share what they learn with their peers.

"In my tutoring program, I want more space so we can help more kids."

- Student in the Parkdale Organize neighbourhood tutoring program

Loga's Corner momo shop is generously providing space for our weekly tutoring sessions. But if the program is to grow we are in need of a larger space. **If you know of a space that could work (such as a Co-op multipurpose room, church, or community centre), please get in touch!** In addition, **if you are a young person or adult who is interested in participating as a tutor or student, you can reach us at parkdaleorganize@gmail.com or 647-874-8793.**

SPENCER AVE TENANTS FIGHT BACK

Landlord agrees to building-wide pest control services.

Successful action at 35 Spencer Ave.

In 2014 Wilstar bought the mid-rise apartment building at 35 Spencer. Since then life has become more difficult for our neighbours who live there. When tenants ask for repairs in their units or for pest control, the landlord ignores them.

In spring 2016 the City ordered Wilstar to renovate the parking garage. Now Wilstar is wants tenants to pay for those renovations. Wilstar wants to raise the rent by 5%.

To make matters worse, the landlord is targeting people who have lived there for a long time. The landlord has told tenants they will no longer fix anything in their unit. The landlord has threatened to take other tenants to court for speaking to their neighbours about these problems.

To fight back, our neighbours have formed a committee at the building. Some people in the building have known each other for a long time. Others are now meeting for the first time. They meet together and they de-

cide what needs to happen at the building. They make commitments to each other and keep them. Now they are organizing to get units fixed and for pest control. They are organizing to stop the rent increase.

In early December the new building committee confronted Wilstar and demanded:

1. Building-wide pest control
2. Repairs in units
3. No above guideline rent increase

When WilStar's property manager accused tenants of "ambushing" him they stood firm and they promised more collective action. When he tried to run away and exited the building, tenants followed him and confronted him outside. Shamefaced, he re-entered the building lobby and committed to: respond in writing regarding in-unit repair and maintenance issues, with a plan to address those issues, by the end of 2016, and provide building-wide pest control services by the end of January 2017.

Working together and with other members of Parkdale Organize our neighbours at 35 Spencer are no longer alone. They look out for each other in the building. Neighbours in other buildings in Parkdale have their backs.

This group of neighbours from different backgrounds and nationalities is working together to make the neighbourhood stronger. They make it stronger by organizing and fighting our common enemy: the landlords who want to take the neighbourhood away from us.



NO FRILLS? NO KIDDING.

"If we organize and beat rent increases but can't afford to eat we still have a problem."

As we all know the No Frills at Jameson and King has been closed to repair the recent roof damage. It's left many people in the neighbourhood unsure about where we're gonna get our groceries. There's a shuttle bus that'll take people to the No Frills up on Lansdowne but who knows how long that will last.

We all know that Vi's No Frills is a **NO Frills** kind of place. The food on the shelves isn't that good, the wages for the workers aren't that good, the prices aren't even that good. But every day the place is packed with our neighbours grabbing what they need. People that live on Tyndall, Spencer, Dowling, Westlodge, Jameson depend on that No Frills. A local and less expensive grocery store isn't a "frill" it's a need for thousands of us. The condo-town Metro over in Liberty village isn't an option and the smaller shops on Queen and King are fine but they can't feed all of us.

There are rumors going around the neighbourhood about whether or not the No Frills is going to open again. We don't know the answer to that. What we do know is that the land around the No Frills is owned by Pinedale Properties Limited. This is the same company that owns the plazas with the McDonalds and the Burger King at King and Dufferin. Pinedale is planning on building 20-floor condos on both these spots. We should expect that they have condos planned for the No Frills plaza too.

Pinedale Properties just like Metcap, Akeilius, the Wynn family and all the other big and small landlords don't care about any of us. We're not neighbours to them. We are not even really people. We're a rent cheque that



gets deposited on the 1st of the month. If they can get a bigger rent cheque off of someone else then that's what they're going to try to do. They don't care if we lose our home, if our kids lose their school, or if we can't afford to live or eat in our neighbourhood anymore. That's just business to them.

We all know this. If we organize and beat rent increases but can't afford to eat we still have a problem. If we force landlords to do repairs but our neighbours are evicted or deported then we still have a problem. If we fight the evictions and deportations but they drop a 20-floor condo filled with rich people next door to us then we still have a problem. The question is what are we going to do about it?

These problems may sound big but we can solve them together with an organization of our neighbours, for our neighbourhood. We do not have that organization yet but we get closer to that organization with each landlord we organize against and each neighbour we organize with. Organizing isn't a *frill* in Parkdale. We need it.