

A person wearing a dark jacket, blue jeans, and grey gloves is using a red snow shovel to clear snow. The background is a snowy outdoor setting with a wooden fence. A large red diagonal stripe runs from the top left towards the bottom right of the page.

Your guide to Being a Snow Angel

What is a Snow Angel?

Snow Angels are good neighbours who help clear others' driveways, sidewalks, and/or walkways of ice and snow during the winter months.

Why clear snow for a neighbour in need?

- It feels good to help your neighbours.
- It's a great way for neighbours to get-to-know one another.
- When sidewalks are free of ice and snow, it helps everyone in your neighbourhood go about their daily activities safely and without fear.
- You can support your neighbours to live independently.
- You can help your neighbours meet their responsibilities as homeowners to remove ice and snow from their sidewalk.

What does a Snow Angel do?

Almost anyone can be a Snow Angel. All you need to do is:

1. Choose one or more neighbours you'd like to help.
 - When you're out and about in your neighbourhood be aware of neighbours who could use a hand.
2. Wait for the snow to fall.
3. Grab your gear.
 - All you need is warm clothing, a shovel or snow blower, and salt or sand to apply where needed.
4. Lend a hand.
 - You can help your neighbour clear as much or as little snow as you like. You can help with clearing the sidewalk, a driveway, walkways, and/or the windrow (the snow left behind by the snow plow).

If you can't shovel, you can help by raising awareness

You can still make a positive impact even if you can't shovel or don't have time to bring a group together. Not everyone thinks about the negative impact that snow covered sidewalks and driveways can have on people's lives. When you do it in a friendly and positive way, raising awareness about the benefits of cleared sidewalks, and encouraging your neighbours to shovel, can go a long way to making your neighbourhood safer and more accessible for everyone.

Templates you can use are included in this guidebook.

How can I get my neighbours involved?

Is there a need in your neighbourhood? If so, you don't have to go it alone. If you have the time and energy, you can seek out other neighbours who may want to be Snow Angels too.

Here are some steps and ideas for getting started:

1. Determine the need

Have you noticed that some neighbours on your street struggle to get shoveling done? Are there priority areas that you feel need attention like a school zone or areas surrounding bus stops? Is it a few households? A block? A few streets? You can determine which areas or households you would like to try and cover.

2. Find out what's already happening

Talk to your [Neighbourhood Association](#) and other local groups to see if something similar is already happening. Find out if they are interested in the idea, or if they know someone who can provide help or guidance.

3. Generate ideas and support

Talk to your neighbours and gather community support. In an open and friendly way, let your neighbours know why you think it's important. Find out if they feel the benefit too, and if there is any interest in helping out. Not everyone thinks about the impact that snow covered sidewalks

and driveways can have on people's lives. Even just bringing attention to this issue is a step in the right direction.

4. Make a plan and get things ready

Decide what action to take based on what you've heard from your neighbours and how much support you have. If you have a few neighbours, or an organization who are willing to help, meet with them and make a plan together. Things to consider:

- **Do you need more help?** Depending on the need in your neighbourhood, you might want to advertise and recruit more neighbours. Templates you can use are included in this guidebook.
- **What actions do you need to take?** You might want to make a list of places to advertise or map out the houses or areas to cover.
- **What materials do you need?** Do you need paper for posters and postcards? Does everyone have a shovel and salt or sand?
- **Who will do what?** Decide who will be the contact if someone wants to be a Snow Angel or needs a Snow Angel. Who will put up posters? Who will post online?
- **Divide the work.** Shifts and areas can be assigned weekly to Snow Angels or neighbours can be assigned to help specific neighbours, or areas for the season.

Places to advertise:

- Community Centres
- Neighbourhood Association Newsletters and websites
- Neighbourhood social media groups or local social groups (online or in-person)
- Places of worship
- Schools
- Sports facilities such as pools, arenas, and gyms
- Businesses in your neighbourhood like restaurants, stores, and pharmacies
- Local non-profits

5. Make it happen

When the snow flies, so do your angels! Be sure everyone on your Snow Angel team is ready to go, knows what they need to do, where they need to go, and has the right materials. *Let the shovelling begin!*

6. Appreciate and celebrate!

Staying in touch online or getting together is a good way to update each other, share tips and stories, and help keep each other motivated to continue. It's important to take time to appreciate all of your hard work, thank everyone involved and recognize what a positive impact you've made in your neighbourhood and on the lives of people around you.

Things to think about

Safety first

Helping someone shovel their driveway and sidewalk is a kind gesture, but please remember to take precautions for your own health and safety too. Here are some helpful tips:

- Stretch before you shovel
- Wear layered clothing to stay warm
- Use an ergonomic-shaped snow shovel to help reduce back pain
- Space your hands on the shovel to increase leverage
- Lift with your knees, not your back
- Clear ice and snow as soon as possible to prevent build-up
- After removing snow, apply salt and/ or sand where necessary

How to ask a neighbour if they need help

Often Snow Angels don't ask, they just help. That's what makes it so neighbourly! So, if you feel like it and are able to do so, just go ahead and shovel for a neighbour without saying anything.

However, you may feel more comfortable helping if you've chatted with the neighbour first. It's also a nice opportunity to get to know one another a bit more and even develop new friendships. You also never know - the person you help with snow removal, may be able to help you with something you need someday!

Here are some sample phrases and wording to try out when making that first contact/connection:

My family/I enjoy being outside and getting fresh air, even in winter! We were wondering if we could lend you a hand with snow shovelling this winter. **OR:** We would like to help you out with snow removal this year. Would that be okay with you?

Some people in our neighbourhood are pledging to help others out with snow removal when possible this winter. Would you like to be a part of that? **OR:** Would you like to be on our list? Here's a flier with more information about how to get involved.

Resources

[Canva](#). A free, easy-to-use, online design tool with templates for creating posters, fliers, and more.

The City of Kitchener has grant funding for up to 10 neighbourhood snow blowers. Each snow blower is to be shared by residents living in the same neighbourhood. Interested Kitchener residents can [apply online](#) to receive up to \$500 towards the purchase of a new snow blower.

[Recognize a Good Neighbour](#). Do you have someone who has helped you shovel? The City of Kitchener can help you say thanks. Tell us about your Snow Angel by filling out our [online nomination form](#).

The [Snow Removal FAQs](#) page provides some answers to the questions the City of Kitchener gets most often about clearing snow on roads and sidewalks.

Have questions?

Volunteer Engagement, City of Kitchener
volunteer@kitchener.ca

For all other LoveMyHood enquiries contact the Neighbourhood Development Office
lovemyhood@kitchener.ca; 519-741-2200 ext. HOOD (4663)

This information is available in accessible formats upon request.

Please call 519-741-2200 ext. 7083 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.

Thank you for being a good neighbour!

If you are a Snow Angel, thank you for helping out in your neighbourhood! If you're not, don't worry, there are lots of other ways to be a good neighbour. Whether you organize a street party, attend one, or simply smile and say hi to the people you pass on the street, thank you for helping your neighbours feel welcome and that they belong. Whether you keep your property neat and tidy, pick up a few pieces of garbage during an evening walk, or lead a community clean-up, thank you for helping to beautify your neighbourhood. Everyone is different with unique interests, skills, and talents to share. Whether you do something small or big, or if it takes several hours or just a few seconds, you are making a positive contribution to your neighbourhood. No matter what you decide to do, thank you for doing something to help make your neighbourhood great!