



November 7, 2011

The Town of Richmond Hill is pleased to invite you to consider participating in Doors Open Richmond Hill for 2012. Each year the Doors Open Richmond Hill Organizing Committee selects a maximum of 15 sites to participate in the event. We are requesting your participation because we believe that your site would be an extremely interesting venue for visitors and we would be pleased to consider your application to be on our list of sites for 2012.

What is Doors Open

The first Doors Open Day (La Journée Portes Ouvertes) took place in France in 1984. The idea soon spread to neighbouring countries, including the Netherlands, Sweden, the Republic of Ireland, Belgium and Scotland. In 1991, these events were united as European Heritage Days at the initiative of the Council of Europe. In 2003, all 48 signatory states of the European Cultural Convention participated in European Heritage Days.

In 2000, the City of Toronto launched the first Doors Open event in North America. In 2002, the Ontario Heritage Trust launched Doors Open Ontario, the first province-wide event of its kind in Canada. The Doors Open concept continues to spread across North America with events now being held in Newfoundland, Alberta, Massachusetts, Western New York State, New York City and Denver.

Every year, Doors Open Ontario attracts large crowds across Ontario. From April to October, residents and visitors are invited to discover first-hand Ontario's hidden heritage treasures, some of which have never been open to the public. Since the program was launched in 2002, nearly 3 million visits have been made to heritage sites participating in this exciting initiative. Doors Open Ontario, now considered a cultural phenomenon, will continue in 2012 with hundreds of communities participating in over 50 events across the province.

Throughout the Province, there is a growing pride in heritage. Communities boast of their commercial buildings, courthouses, places of worship, gardens and natural heritage. Richmond Hill is no exception and is pleased to open the doors to some of our most unique and intriguing heritage sites for everyone to experience. Will you be one of them? For more information about Doors Open Ontario please visit www.doorsopenontario.on.ca.

In Richmond Hill we hosted our first Doors Open event in 2009. The event will be held on **Saturday May 12th.2012**. Each year this one-day event showcases up to 15 sites from across Richmond Hill. The staff from the Heritage Services Section of the Town of Richmond Hill Community Services Department facilitates the organization and delivery of this event by providing information and assistance to all participating sites.

Benefits of participation

If you choose to submit an application, the Town of Richmond Hill Heritage Services staff will guide you through all the necessary steps for participation. In this package you will find an “Application & Agreement of Participation” form. In order to confirm your interest in participating, we ask that you complete the application and return it to the Heritage Services Coordinator no later than November 25th, 2011

There is no cost for participating sites. All promotional materials are designed printed and paid for by the Town of Richmond Hill and Doors Open Ontario. Last year’s participating sites benefited from inclusion in various promotions, publications, and local media.

Sites are encouraged to create a unique experience for their visitors that reflect the history of their building. This could include but is not limited to a guided tour, a guest speaker, old photos and historical information about your site etc. Each site must be able to remain open to the public free of charge from 10:00am – 4:00pm during the event. Sites are also encouraged to provide a sufficient number of volunteers to deliver the experience planned for you site.

For private residences we understand the unique challenges a homeowner faces when agreeing to open their home for an event of this type, we will provide as much support as we can and we will put you in touch with other homeowners who have participated in Doors Open Richmond Hill.

Once we receive your application, a member of the Doors Open Richmond Hill Organizing Committee will be contacting you shortly in order to provide you with more information. The Town of Richmond Hill is dedicated to working closely with you to help ensure the successful participation of your site. Please contact me if you have questions about any aspect of the program.

Sincerely,

Michelle Zikovitz
Heritage Services Coordinator - Acting
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