

**Vital Ideas and Leadership Grants**

**2017**

**APPLICATION FORM**

**Deadline: 5pm on Wednesday, December 14, 2016**

*It is recommended that the FAQ document is reviewed along with the*

*Submission Guidelines before beginning your application.*

**Cover Sheet – organization contact information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of applying organization** | Center for Local Research into Public Space (CELOS) |
| **Charitable registration number** | 82118 9149 RR 0001 |
| **Name of initiative for which funds are being requested**  | Vital Ideas and Leadership |
| **Street address of organization**  | 242 Havelock St, Toronto, On, M6H 3B9 |
| **Organization contact name and title**  | Jutta Mason, Administrator |
| **E-mail address of organization contact**  | mail@celos.ca |
| **Phone number of organization contact** | 416-533-0153 |
| **Organization’s website address** | [www.celos.ca](http://www.celos.ca) |
| **Amount requested (up to $50,000)** | $49,000 |
| **Total current annual operating budget for organization** | $51,000 (2015) |
| **Total current annual operating budget for initiative seeking Vital Ideas and Leadership grant** | unknown |

***If your organization is not a registered charity:***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Charitable partner name and address*** |  |
| ***Charitable partner charitable registration number*** |  |
| ***Charitable partner contact name, email and phone number*** |  |
| ***Charitable partner total annual operating budget*** |  |

**Application authorization**:

Name, Title: \_Peter Thillaye. President\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*(This application must be approved by an organizational representative with authority to legally bind the organization.*)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**about the applying organization**

Information provided in this section is used to assess the background and reputation of the applying organization.

1. **About the organization (Limit: 400 words)**

CELOS was started in 2000 as an offshoot of the Friends of Dufferin Grove Park (which began in 1992). CELOS became a non-profit in 2005, received charitable status in 2009. Awards for the organization or its members: Toronto Community Foundation Safe City Award 1994, Toronto Civic Award 1997, Project for Public Spaces Great Community Park Award 2001. Since then Dufferin Grove Park has become known as “a community centre without walls” citywide and internationally.

Main initiatives:

1993: installation of adventure playground, with City and Dufferin Mall support.

1995: *Set up year-round CELOS collaboration with front-line and management Parks and Recreation staff*, built first community bake oven. Started school pizza days.

1995-96: community/City conversion of main park building into community clubhouse. Began planting community gardens and tree nurseries (16 plots, one-third food, one-third flowers, one-third native species). The clubhouse became the staging area for: seniors’ drop-in program, Child Nutrition program, Breaking the Cycle of Youth Violence and Odd Jobs for Youth programs (municipal and federal support), youth court follow-up, parent-and-child drop-in, community campfires.

1997-2000: added resident theatre program (including conversion of field house), rink “zamboni café,” access to drop-in sports program ($2 skate lending, free equipment loan), follow-up and food source for homeless people living in the park. In 2000, built second community bake oven with citywide apprentices, then third oven in Christie Pits Park.

2001 – 2004: added farmers’ market, weekly community suppers, Cooking Fire Theatre Festival, set up websites (now 5) documenting these activities. 2005: Expanded CELOS-city staff collaboration to two Ward 18 neighbourhood rinks with rink clubhouse modifications, plus two other Ward 18 playgrounds with clubhouse modifications, resident artist, community gardens, community cafés, suppers, campfires. At Dufferin Grove, engaged 500 participants over the summer to build an adobe outdoor kitchen and café, with Parks staff plumbers and electricians.

2006: Expanded citywide with cooking, campfires, rink and theatre support for other parks, “Taking the Show on the Road” grant.

2007: presentation of citywide rink report to city councillors.

2010: Began transfer of successful Ward 18 parks programs to Recreation management, completed in 2013.

2015: presentation of follow-up citywide rink report to city councilors. 2010 to the present: wide-ranging documentation and follow-up of local and citywide recreation and park issues on three of our websites, research and analysis of parks and recreation book-keeping and budget details. Published *“Dufferin Grove Park as a neighbourhood commons.”*

**about the initiative**

Information provided in this section is used to assess whether the initiative for which you are applying for funding is high-impact and whether it’s at the right stage for a Vital Ideas and Leadership grant.

1. **Toronto’s Vital Signs issue area addressed by the initiative**

Please select one or two of the Toronto’s Vital Signs issue areas which best fit with the issues and trends that your initiative addresses (for more information see: [www.torontosvitalsigns.ca](http://www.torontosvitalsigns.ca)).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Arts and Culture |  | Health and Wellness |
|  | Environment |  | Housing |
|  | Gap Between Rich & Poor |  | Learning |
|  | Getting Around |  | Safety |
| **x** | Leadership, Civic Engagement, and Belonging | **x** | Work |

1. **How is this initiative improving Toronto’s quality of life? (Limit: 300 words)**

We have built a “community centre without walls” model and have documented the extensive staff/park user collaboration here for the ten years of its flowering. Park enthusiasts from across the city (and from other cities) came to Dufferin Grove Park, and continue to come, for many conversations. They experimented with some of our ideas in their own neighbourhoods. We now want to research how promising projects that were attempted – but were blocked – could get another chance by devising workable service contracts for park programs.

Our guide here is Jane Jacobs. In particular:

1. “A city has to be responsible for keeping its own society endlessly involved with maintaining a city its own people can feel at home in and be proud of…..The more that cities can make of their own ordinary people’s capacities for economic and social invention and experiment, the more useful and valuable cities become – not only for their own people but also for their nations.”
2. Jacobs wrote that “stagnation” in cities is caused by (among other things) “unwillingness of local government to purchase experimental and innovative goods and services (e.g. for parks…)”

 In the four years since we handed over the programs completely to city management, costs have gone up but many of the programs are faltering. We’ve documented the problems in detail, but now we want to take the next step. If the working culture of local government is too restrictive, and the wall between the staff and the parks enthusiasts needs to become more permeable, how can this be brought about? We believe that with the device of a new kind of service contract, it’s possible to grow an experimental approach that can gradually become part of the Parks and Recreation culture in Toronto.

1. **Populations served**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **x** | All ages | **x** | LGBTQ\* |
|  | Children – up to 11 | **x** | Newcomers |
|  | Youth – 12 to 18 | **x** | People with Disabilities |
|  | Young adults – 19 to 29 | **x** | Ethno-specific |
|  | Adults – 30 to 64 | **x** | Women |
|  | Seniors – 65 and up | **x** | Men |

1. **How do you know your initiative is effective? (Limit: 200 words)**

In 1992 we wanted Dufferin Grove Park to be a more lively place but didn’t have a blueprint. Each step led to another step, and with initial support from city management, the effect was much larger than we had imagined possible. By 1997, the outdoor rink had changed from being used very little to a count of over 10,000 visits per season. By 2005, city census estimates were over 15,000 visits just during the holidays, and over 1000 on most weekends throughout the season. An hourly census of warm-weather usage on a random spring Saturday (no special events) in 2006 and again in 2009 counted over 1800 visitors between 8 a.m. and 10 pm. On days when there were local events, the count was much higher. This effect spread to Wallace Emerson rink when we began programs there. In 2011, with programs in three Ward 18 parks, the food and skate lending income going back into the park programs peaked at $201,770.66.

 But the best is: remarkable often, when friends are seen having a good time at the park, and they are asked: “how do you all know each other?” the answer is “we met at the park, of course.”

1. **Best practices and collaborations (Limit: 100 words)**

Over years, the staff at Dufferin Grove Park asked their management if the park could be designated as an area for experiment and trying things, including learning through mistakes. The answer was always no. But in retrospect, for ten years that’s exactly what happened anyway.

The programs developed in uneven but continuous steps, with the park kids taking the most active role at the outset (see CELOS slide shows). Other unexpected influences were from a progression of homeless park users acting as park guardians, and even from basketball/jailbird guys who worked to keep fights (and weapons) out of “our” park.

1. **Participant story (Limit: 200 words)**

People who are different can be very lonely. One kind of difference is carrying a diagnosis, for instance “homeless” or “refugee” or “disabled.” But people who are different have made the park more lively, more interesting, and more friendly. **Interview with James and Andrea**

James Brown, who was born with Down syndrome, has been an important part of the park for years – his participation is a gift.

*James:* “In the winter I help out in the kitchen, and I come to skate at night-time.”

*Andrea (James’ mother):* “His friendships at the park gave James his first real independence.”

*James:* “Yeah. When I come to the park now, I like to be a performer, sing into my mike. Like karaoke.”

*Andrea:* “You do that at home too, but you mostly do it here. You pick up your headphones and your mike and you head down to the park, and you sing there. And often when I come down at the end of the evening, you’re sitting at the picnic table with the skateboarders.”

James is one of the many people who have found friendship because the park gives them a context. And each one gives back through their presence.

1. **Brief description of initiative (Limit: 15 words)**

We will prepare three detailed experimental service contracts for use with the City of Toronto.

**the grant request**

1. **Rationale for grant request (Limit: 300 words)**

Our initiative is not so much based on events, but rather on building neighbourhood commons. Over the years, our project team’s various park involvements of 180+ years (added all together) has built friendly connections with other park friends, paid and unpaid, across the city.

Certain blockages resulting from excessive centralization at city hall have diminished people’s enjoyment of such involvements. That means that local initiatives are often in a fragile state. But there is a base of enthusiasm for trying things that can be rebuilt. Our “service contracts” project may be one such way.

From Trinity-Bellwoods Park: *“I picture the city as a massive container ship that can handle major crossings, high seas, and bear heavy loads. But it moves slowly and changes direction glacially, so we need tugboats - smaller more maneuverable groups and organizations that are adaptable and can change direction in response to particular, more immediate needs.”*

The citywide connections that we have built up over the years are an asset. We can turn to many wise people to explore a new kind of park programming -- we think of Rob Howarth, the long-time AOCC liaison worker, Susan Piggott, former head of St.Christopher House and VP of community relations at CAMH and steadfast friend of parks, Pat MacKay, who was on the Toronto Community Foundation Board when we got our first-ever award, Jode Roberts, injecting new life into Christie Pits after a time of discouragement for their friends’ group – and so many more. Our recent publication “Dufferin Grove Park as a neighbourhood commons, 1993 to 2015” became the prompt for over a hundred lively conversations, while delivering the booklet to only some of the people who had helped the park. We think that even the process of working on this issue will deepen the connections that are needed.

1. **Detail of strategic activities (Limit: 300 words)**

In the course of our project of fleshing out the details of Jane Jacobs’ advice to local city government – to avoid becoming “stagnant” by purchasing experimental and innovative services from the “ordinary people” who inhabit a city – our focus will be on **“in-sourcing”** rather than “out-sourcing.” We intend to make much use of the expertise of people who work, paid or unpaid, at the grass-roots level in parks.

Research : we want to find, study, and document all existing written City of Toronto materials including current city service contracts, partnership agreements, arms length agreements, conservancies and any other variants. Also relevant union agreements citywide. We’ll also look for inspiration elsewhere in Canada and the U.S.

Field work: we want to have discussions with individuals and groups around Toronto about what blocks they have encountered in parks. We want to ask them to think in detail: *What kind of service contracts would strengthen their initiatives?*

The kinds of initiatives we will focus on are park-based drop-in community programs, including DIY skateboard parks, sports, food, child care, youth development, gardens, homelessness, art and theater, disability, newcomer, poverty in addition to other initiatives that also have done similar kind of research into park budgets or park management.

Publicity: We want to post our research on our CELOS website and publicize it through social media, print and radio.

Why this is needed: the energy that starts new local projects in parks seems to sink almost inevitably into the centralized hierarchy which is currently the default of city management practice. The existing vocabulary of what’s possible needs to be expanded – creating a new model for service contracts, different in specific ways from the dozen or so kinds the city already uses.

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1. **Detail of professional development activities (Limit: 300 words)**

Who: CELOS operates as a flexible group of consultants. The timing of this grant overlaps with a time when more of our consultants than usual could fit this project into their other commitments. The team has a total of 180 years experience among us of working either as part-time city staff or CELOS consultants (or both) or in another partnership relation to the city. Six of the team are members of CUPE.

Bios:

Mayssan Shuja Uddin: 13 years as City part-time program coordinator at Ward 18 facilities. Researcher and project lead for CELOS.

Jutta Mason: 30 years of fostering neighborhood public spaces. Jane Jacobs Prize 2001, Governor General’s Sovereign medal 2012.

Amy Withers: 11 years as city part-time program staff at Ward 18 facilities. Former CUPE unit officer for 10,000 part-time recreation staff.

Jane Wells: 20 years as artistic resource coordinator of the CARE program at Trinity-Bellwoods Park.

Kristen Fahrig: 14 years as artist in residence and program lead at MacGregor Playground Park.

Dale Howey: Bake oven coordinator at Montgomery’s Inn farmers’ market, mentor for citywide community oven programs.

Laura Berman: Foodshare consultant for 17 years. Worked in partnerships with City on a variety of community projects.

Nayssam Shujauddin: Background in advertising and design. Worked at Ward 18 parks for 5 years. Designed and produced CELOS publications.

Anne Freeman: Head of Toronto Farmers’ Market Network (TFMN), manager of Dufferin Grove farmers’ market

Henrik Bechmann: former CELOS software developer. Project lead of budgetpedia.ca

with the group CivicTech.

Sabina Ali: head of Thorncliffe Park Women’s Committee. Jane Jacobs Prize 2014. Nine-year CELOS collaborator.

Dan Watson and Christina Serra: Both worked at Dufferin Grove Park for 4 years in all areas. Experts in accessibility issues and programs.

Belinda Cole: 20 years of independent legal and policy research about the effect of laws and policies on Toronto city life.

Geraldine Dempsey: park friend, evaluation specialist.

What kind of professional development: We need to learn (from each other and from other willing experts) how to structure service contracts.

1. **Detail of evaluation activities (Limit: 300 words)**

Our objective is only as good as its (very specific) outcome. We want create three ready-to-go service contracts of a new kind that don’t currently exist. That means we have to evaluate

(a) whether the new contracts created on the basis of written-source research and fieldwork research are organizationally and financially viable

(b) whether the groups of “ordinary people” referred to by Jane Jacobs are ready to make the contacts work,

(c) whether local government is willing to enlarge its culture to include this kind of experimentation and innovation, proposed by Jacobs as one way to ward off “stagnation” of cities, and

(d) whether this new version of service contracts enters into public discussion on Toronto – whether it “has legs.”

Data collection:

Our content evaluator is intended to have some distance. Although she has often been at Dufferin Grove, she is intentionally the only team member not familiar with the way Parks and Recreation works from the inside. During the course of the project, we want her to give us ongoing assessments on the quality of both the research sources and the fieldwork write-ups – are we meeting our numbers and is the material detailed enough?

Our financial evaluator will work to provide us with a financial base line of current costs related to the existing internally-run park programs. He will analyze the proposed service contracts, as they are being worked out, to assess their costs and make the financial documentation available as open data on the budgetpedia website.

Timeline: If after one year of the end of this project, two such service contracts are in place, we will have succeeded. If not, the project will have failed. At least it will not have been for want of trying.

1. **Potential to grow impact (Limit: 150 words)**

Need:

Dufferin Grove: *“Now that there is no local hiring, no on-site supervision, and no support for any interesting programs, many of the staff who actually cared about the park have left out of frustration, and a different culture has taken hold at Dufferin Grove.”*

Thorncliffe Park: *“Though the winter carnivals and Pan Am spectator jam events were in partnership with the City of Toronto, Thornciffe Park Women’s Committee (TPWC) was the only group who worked for free. All the others were paid city staff....Despite all these years of our incredible work around park animation and the park programs, TPWC do not have core funding.”*

Impact: Such stories are common, citywide. The contributions of many talented people are lost in this way, because they give up and leave. We believe that well-designed service contracts encouraging local experimentation and innovation can ordinary people’s gifts and talents back into the parks.

1. **Board List (Limit: 150 words)**

All board members are personally familiar with how Dufferin Grove Park and its programs

PETER THILLAYE Principal, Film Sound Design, joined board 2005

JANE LOWBEER artist, illustrator, part-time farmer, joined 2005

MATT LEITOLD city worker in social services, liaison between with city staff and CELOS board, joined 2005

JANE PRICE Director, Education and Development Branch, Ministry of the Attorney General, helps CELOS with legal and administrative matters, joined 2007

MARY JANE YOUNG Metis councilor working in the Native community for 35 years, joined 2005

CHRIS STERNBERG Toronto midwife and university teacher, joined 2007

ANNE BJORSETH family therapist for mental health issues,  joined 2011,

LEA AMBROS, theatre producer, former DG staff member, joined 2011

LILY WESTON school disability assistant, first staff member at DG, joined 2013

Total number of board members required according to your organization’s by-laws: 7 or more

1. **Grant Request Budget**

Please ensure to follow the directions and format in the Submission Guidelines.

**Attachments**

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| --- | --- |
|  | **Audited Financials**<http://www.celos.ca/wiki/wiki.php?n=FinancialRecords.2015Details>Note: CELOS has not had audited financial statements because the hybrid nature of our relationship with the city put us in a gray area. The food and skate income all went back to the city, first via the Ward 18 parks, then directly. The transfer of operations took more than 3 years. After that our income intentionally became too small to require (or pay for) an audit. We have always posted our financials as open data on our website, as a substitute. If we get this vital ideas grant, the funds we raise in the neighbourhood will have to pay for an audit.  |
|  | ***Trusteeship Agreement (if applicable)*** |