



Jane's Walk a Big Success in 2018

This year's Jane's Walk in the Greater Akron area included 18 different walks with more than 255 participants. Each walk had something unique to offer and prompted the surprise of unlikely stories. The diversity of Akron's neighborhoods that were represented in the walks included downtown Akron, Goodyear Heights, Kenmore, West Akron, Cuyahoga Falls, Hudson, and Peninsula. The walks touched on a variety of themes such as infrastructure, art, history, neighborhoods, parks, lakes, and architecture.

Jane's Walk is a global walking initiative held annually on the first weekend of May that began in Toronto in 2007 as a means to explore local neighborhoods and foster open discussion amongst its neighbors and the community. It was created by friends and colleagues of Jane Jacobs, renowned author and urbanist, who captured the essence of the city when she wrote *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Jacobs' emphasis was on the interests of local residents, at a time when scale models and grand visions of the future removed designers from the experience of the city by foot.

By getting out and walking the walk, participants learn about the everyday events and rhythms of the neighborhoods that surround our immediate lives. The walks also help support participation in active planning for building better communities. Many people commented that the walks allowed them to see things they'd never seen before in the community and to think about how these places came to be the way they are.

Two common threads ran through the walks – 1) **History** - a community's rich history has a huge impact on the present environment. History cannot be built as it is the development of time and events. 2) **Movement of People** - the center of a community's fabric is movement and action that is woven together by its people in making the diversity of each neighborhood.

Jane's Walk also stimulated discussion around:

- What people value in public spaces
- Ways to improve the neighborhood and downtown's walkability and quality of life
- How our neighborhood, lakes, and downtown change over time
- What we find special or unique about the neighborhoods and downtowns
- Our vision for a better place in our city by strengthening community identity

Jane's Walk 2018 in the Akron area has been a very moving and enlightening experience for all. The walks brought out creative ideas, which can lead to positive change in the community. Inherent to building more livable cities is ensuring that people are part of the process through discussion of good city building. With keen insight, Jane Jacobs noted that "*designing a dream city is easy; rebuilding a living one takes imagination.*"

See attached for more details