



# Newton Community Art Mosaics

Connie Glover and Vallalee Hoffman

**September 2006**

**Newton Wave Pool, Arena, Community Centre,  
Youth Centre & Seniors Centre, 137 Street & 72 Avenue**

Artists Connie Glover and Vallalee Hoffman worked closely with members of the Newton community, young and old, to produce glass and ceramic tile mosaics outside each of four recreational facilities in the Newton Town Centre area. Each outdoor mosaic is site-specific, making reference to the activities and aspirations particular to the facility where it is located. The four mosaic artworks are *Community*, a mural on an exterior wall of the Newton Recreation Centre Arena; *Splish Splash*, installed on a pillar at the entrance of the Wave Pool; *The Garden*, created for a large, concrete bench outside the Seniors' Centre; and *Metamorphosis*, mounted on an inside wall of the Arena.

During a series of free workshops and school workshops, interested community members collaborated with the artists to design, construct and, in some cases, install the mosaics. Ideas were exchanged, images were gathered, and participants learned how to nip ceramic tiles and form them into mosaic images. Through both their creation and public location, the Newton mosaics were intended to build pride in the community, foster understanding and respect, reflect a sense of shared identity, and beautify their surroundings.

The three principal figures represented in *Community* are a twirling figure skater, an ice-hockey goalie and a martial artist. Underlined with a sequence of small, tumbling gymnasts, they represent activities that occur in the arena. Within the geometric-pattern border of the mosaic, the word "community" is written in four languages -- English, French, Punjabi and Chinese (traditional) -- reflecting Newton's cultural diversity.

The wave pool mosaic, *Splish Splash*, includes images and words that refer to water activities and sea creatures. Interspersed among the fish, starfish, snails, turtles, crabs, and scuba divers are words such as *waves*, *splish splash*, *current* and *explore*, evoking a sense of lively aquatic adventure.





*The Garden* evokes the cycle of life and the pleasures of the garden. The sentence “All the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today” forms an arc across the back of the bench. It is surrounded by a rich tapestry of flowers, toadstools, bullrushes, lily pads, an owl and a dragonfly, with the sun in one corner and the moon in the other. More flowers in vibrant colours embellish the front of the bench, with a geometric design installed on its base.

Parents and daughters worked together with the artists to produce *Metamorphosis*, which expresses the wondrous changes that occur during adolescence and the blossoming forth of young adults from awkward children. A caterpillar, many butterflies, a young woman leaping upwards with arms stretched high and a skateboarder doing a flip are linked by the word *metamorphosis*, which flows like a stream across the mosaic.

#### **About the Artist:**

Connie Glover has been a full-time ceramist for over many years, producing decorative and functional ware and completing a number of public art and community art projects. She studied art at Douglas College (Surrey) and at Laguna Beach School of Art in California, and completed residencies at the Banff Centre and in Japan. Glover has taught for many years.

Vallalee Hoffman is a versatile artist, arts educator and facilitator; her principal medium is clay, using a variety of techniques. She has completed many “Artist in the School” residence programs and worked with the ArtStarts Program where her passion has been working with young students. Hoffman has been exploring the realm of community-based public art and generously volunteers her time to assist numerous arts related committees. Vallalee Hoffman received a BFA from Emily Carr Institute.

