

Individuals Running for the DECA 2026-2027 Board:

Alexandra (Alex) Kelly (*New)

I have been living in the community for over two years and have been volunteering with DECA since summer 2015. During that time, I've come to value the role DECA plays in bringing people together and creating spaces that are welcoming, inclusive, and rooted in respect for the diverse communities that make up our neighbourhood. By profession, I am a CPA with strong organizational skills and financial acumen. I am excited by the opportunity to apply these skills to help DECA to continue to operate sustainably and effectively. I am also a people-oriented person who enjoys collaborating, sharing ideas, and contributing in ways that support a strong sense of community. I spend much of my free time on creative pursuits – painting, pottery, and browsing local thrift stores to find unique treasures to upcycle and/or decorate with. I look forward to bringing this creativity into DECA events and activities.

Alexander Marsolais (returning)

My family and I have lived in the Danforth East neighbourhood since 2015. I have been volunteering for DECA for several years and joined the board for the first time last year. I have really enjoyed the opportunity to get involved in various DECA events and initiatives over that time. It has been a great way to be reminded of everything that makes our neighbourhood great, and the ways that an organization like DECA can contribute to a community. I am a big believer in being involved with your community and also believe the work DECA does has a positive impact on our neighbourhood. I am keen to help continue and support DECA's work in the Danforth East neighbourhood in the coming year!

Alida Minchella (returning)

Community is important. I want to be a community builder. That's it, in a nutshell. It may sound trite but it's so true. Those are the ties that give us a sense of safety, happiness and belonging. Big cities – Toronto in particular – have a reputation for being unwelcoming. Our East York community (and I'm sure there are many others around the city) is proof that this is not the case. But this takes effort on the part of its citizens. I would like to be a part of the community building.

Alisa Metcalfe (returning)

The thirty years that I have now lived in this neighbourhood have given me a strong sense of community and created connections that really are the fabric of who I am as a

person. Growing up in small town Windsor, Ontario, I remember feeling lost when I first moved to the “big city” of Toronto for grad school. I slowly came to love the sights and sounds of Toronto but it was not until I moved into this neighbourhood that I finally found a space that became home. This little east end hub of ours is unique with DECA having, in my experience, always played such an instrumental role in creating, building and fostering this sense of community – that sense of belonging. The efforts of this committed group of volunteers have, over the years, done so much to create a vibrant, connected and beautifully diverse community where people want to put down roots and where you feel like you are part of something bigger than yourself. For so many years, I benefitted from what DECA has contributed to this neighbourhood. Volunteering for the Board now allows me to play a more active role in continuing to build this community of ours and an opportunity to give back in whatever way I can to this place that I now consider to be my home.

Andrea Nichols Egan (returning)

I have lived in the neighbourhood since 2001 and have also owned a business on the Danforth for 4 years now. I started volunteering with DECA about 7 years ago doing some of the social media for the East Lynn Park Farmers’ Market and have been an active volunteer since then – including being on the Board and the Treasurer for the past 4 years. I love working with such an enthusiastic, community minded group of people. I would be happy to continue my work on the board for the next year.

Gulnigar Baham (returning)

Hi, I’m Gulnigar, a nonprofit leader with a passion for community development and education. With experience in program delivery, partnership building, and newcomer support, I enjoy creating inclusive spaces where people can connect and grow. Living in the Danforth East area with my family, I’d love to support DECA’s initiatives in local engagement, community connections, and newcomer inclusion to highlight the incredible vibrance and warmth of our community.

Jenn Scott (returning)

My family and I moved to the Danforth East neighbourhood nearly 11 years ago, just before I had my son. During my parental leave I spent time learning about the Danforth East area and was introduced to DECA, a group of fabulous volunteers and community members who had been working since 2007 to build a vibrant community.

In 2015, DECA’s “Pop-Up Shop” program supported myself and a group of local volunteers to run a Hub on the Danforth that provided household necessities to newly arrived Syrian refugees; a truly life-changing experience. Once the Hub wrapped up operations, I joined the DECA Board, eventually serving as Co-Chair. After taking a break from volunteering for a few years, I returned to serve as Chair of the Board last year. I deeply believe that community involvement provides a sense of belonging and social connectedness, can foster and support inclusion, and creates space for

empathy and accountability. This belief, and the joy I've received from being involved with DECA, is why I hope to continue to serve on the Board. In the coming year — DECA's 19th (!) — I hope to work with the incoming Board and community to help build awareness around DECA's activities and refine its mandate to meet the needs of our neighbourhood.

Raktim Mitra (returning)

I have proudly contributed to DECA as a board member since 2022. In addition to contributing to the farmer's market, arts fair, and city council candidates' debate, I have co-led the DECA Yard Sale event for the past two years. As first-generation immigrants from Bangladesh, my wife and I started our family in Toronto's East-end, and have always called this part of the City our home away from home. Our two children are growing up in this neighbourhood, and we are excited with what this community has to offer. With an intention to more actively contribute to the community, I joined the DECA Board two years ago, and it has been a privilege to work with great colleagues and volunteers who are selflessly working toward making this community more vibrant and welcoming to all. In my professional life, I am an Urban Planning professor. I study and promote neighbourhood livability and active lifestyles. Through my research and teaching, I continue to engage with the Danforth East residents, the City, advocacy organizations such as Cycle Toronto and TCAT, and TDSB elementary schools. My personal and professional values, which focus on creating vibrant, livable communities that are walkable, bikable, safe and happy, align really well with the visions of this association, and because of this, I am hoping to continue my work as a DECA Board member toward these shared goals.

Rebecca Green (returning)

I've been a part of DECA in a variety of roles since the beginning. My particular joy is the farmers' market, where I have painted faces, coordinated volunteers, planned kids' activities, and made a general nuisance of myself. I have also worked on the Danforth East Yard Sale and the clothing and home goods donations to New Circles and Kennedy House Youth Shelter. This initiative combines a lot of my favourite things – textile reuse, mutual aid, thrifting and chatting! I also have been writing the blog and updating website and social media with Jenn and Andrea N-E this year. If I'm elected to the board again this year, I look forward to whatever we come up with next!