



Expand Your Entourage

Do you want to grow your social circle, but find it difficult to meet new people? Like finding romance, making friends is easy—thanks to the Internet.

Montreal resident Geoffrey Funnell, 47, joined the Montreal chapter of Meetin.org when he felt his social life was suffering because he was working too much. Since then he's participated in various volunteer-run activities, such as ziplining, and life is much more interesting.

If Funnell had a penchant for garden gnomes, he would have been in luck: There are also groups for those who share a common interest. Meetup (meetup.com/cities/ca/) has chapters across Canada, built around particular interests: books, motherhood and chess, for example.

Many cities have programs to integrate recent arrivals. When Vinod Ramachandra, 27, moved from Hali-

fax to Saint John, N.B., for a job, he didn't know anyone. So his company's CEO took him to a block party organized by Fusion (fusionsj.com), an organization that helps connect and engage young people in Saint John. Ramachandra now has new friends for hockey games and pub outings. "There hasn't been a single weekend where I've sat idle at home," he says.

If what you're missing is a family bond, look to organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada (bigbrothersbigsisters.ca) and, in Vancouver, Volunteer Grandparents (volunteergrandparents.ca). Ann Coombs, a semi-retired single woman in her 60s, joined Volunteer Grandparents because she loves children. She was introduced to two young sisters and felt an instant connection. Coombs is thankful for the opportunity to bring "fun and delight to the girls' lives."

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