

Creativity & Collaboration Go Hand in Hand

At first glance, a community in northern Ontario settled by mine speculators and lumbermen and a downtown Toronto neighbourhood along St. Clair Avenue might seem to have little in common.

Both are building on the traditional virtues of the village – physical proximity, mutual dependence and concern for neighbour – as a means of encouraging participation and building a vibrant future.

Collaboration plays a key role in these communities that are combining arts initiatives with community economic development projects.



Hillcrest Village Business Improvement Area (BIA) members in Toronto and the planners at Deepwater Regional Development Corporation (DRDC) in the community of Temiskaming Shores have seen the excitement and positive change that happen when artistic and creative projects are used as a starting point for community development and planning.

Local business have learned the value of working with community partners through a variety of projects.

"Part of my job is to educate business people about the benefits of working together," says Brenda Segwick, General Manager at the BIA.

The benefits of working together were apparent when the BIA partnered with Skills for Change, an immigrant services organization, on a mural project.

Skills for Change donated the wall space, helped to organize a community-based design contest and participated in the mural selection team.

The mural itself prompted a community discussion about the community's historical roots and ethnically diverse character.

Working together on creative projects can help address key concerns and create the necessary environment for new ideas to flourish and communities to reinvent themselves.



[Read the full story.](#)

* Excerpted from: Makhoul, Anne. [Using Creativity to Enliven Urban and Rural Villages](#). (Caledon: Ottawa, 2004).

Related Links:

- [Creative City Network](#)
- [Hillcrest BIA](#)



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