



Engage!

Leading Boldly

Social change and adaptive leadership

In 2002, three Foundations rocked the city of Pittsburgh by announcing the suspension of their funding to local public schools. They had, they said, lost confidence in the school board.

The announcement ignited local action – the community launched an independent analysis of the school system and generated recommendations for dramatic changes.

The three Foundations later restored their funding to the schools.



Their actions serve as an example of adaptive leadership – defining a proactive role for funders that want to lead change without imposing predetermined answers on their grantees.

So says Mark Kramer, John Kania, and Ronald Heifetz in their article, “Leading Boldly,” published in the latest issue of the Stanford Social Innovation Review.

“Foundations must employ their expertise, political access, media skills, and bold strategies, rather than just their grant dollars, to generate change,” argue the authors.

They encourage foundations to reject traditional approaches to create social change by adopting imaginative, even controversial, leadership.

 [Read the full article](#)

Related Links:

- [Foundations & community engagement](#)
- [Fundraising resources & links](#)
- [Stanford Social Innovation Review](#)

By: Louise Kearney

Structural Racism & Community Building

Race and poverty have a strong connection. Data from the 2000 U.S. Census show that a person of color is nearly three times more likely to be poor than a white person.

Similarly, a neighbourhood that is largely made up of people of color is more likely to be poor than a predominantly white neighbourhood, and racial minorities are over represented in the poorest and most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

It's important therefore, to consider race and racism when attempting to deal with the social issues our communities face.

Since 1997, the Aspen Institute's Roundtable on Community Change has been focusing on how the problems associated with race and racism in America affect initiatives aimed at poverty reduction in distressed urban neighborhoods.

The Roundtable has explored how race shapes the social, political, economic, and cultural institutions of our society, and how those dynamics produce significant and ongoing racial disparities in the well-being of children, families, and communities.

The Roundtable is sharing the learnings they have generated thus far in a book entitled "Structural Racism and Community Building" which is now available for downloading from their website.

 [Read the report now!](#)

Related Links:

- [Roundtable on Community Change](#)
- [Project on Structural Racism and Community Revitalization](#)
- [Fundors' Network on Racism and Poverty](#)

By: Louise Kearney

Strengthening the Social Safety Net

Canada has a rich array of income support programs to ensure that friends, neighbours and citizens can meet their basic needs.

For a variety of reasons, Canadians sometimes fail to take advantage of the programs for which they are eligible and that they have helped establish.



In 2001-2002, Opportunities Waterloo Region carried out a simple project that assisted up to 600 low income seniors secure the Guaranteed Income Supplement - a program that provides thousands of tax free dollars to those that need it most.

Recently, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy published a new account of this story that provides some lessons learned for other communities considering similar initiatives.

The Opportunities Waterloo Region GIS initiative exemplifies how organizations in a community can collaborate to tackle problems that a single organization could not deal with by themselves and can thus impact the lives of hundreds of people.



[Read the Caledon story.](#)

Related Links:

- [Opportunities Waterloo Region in Vibrant Communities](#)
- [GIS evaluation report](#)

By: Mark Cabaj

Living Wage Initiative is a success!

The Living Wage Learning Initiative has been a very successful series for the Pan Canadian Learning Community. Over 130 people from across the country participated in four tele-learning sessions.

Participants in the learning initiative have had the opportunity to hear from, and speak to, valuable experts on the subjects of voluntary and regulatory approaches to living wage campaigns.

Speakers in the series included;

- Stephanie Luce, author of *Fighting for a Living Wage*, and co-author of *The Living Wage: Building a Fair Economy*
- Scott Klinger, Co-director of [Responsible Wealth](#)
- Joe Allen, Human Resources Director for KPMG
- Jen Kern, Director of the [Living Wage Resource Center](#) at the [Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now](#) (ACORN)
- Jim Gordon from RBC Financial
- Wes Worsfold from J2X Technologies

Throughout the series participants have learned different ways that living wage campaigns are organized, what they try to achieve, their challenges and possible outcomes.

In addition, examples of different living wage campaigns were studied from both the United States and in Canada.

Participants felt the series provided a good combination of theoretical and practical discussions about living wage campaigns.

One participant reports, "The call stimulated great conversation both immediately after and at our living wage action team meeting the following week."



[Learn more about this initiative and listen to the recording of some of the calls!](#)

Related Links:

- [Living Wage Manual](#)
- [Choosing the High Road: Businesses that Pay a Living Wage and Prosper](#)
- [The Effects of the Living Wage in Baltimore](#)
- [More Resources!](#)

By: Kerrie Skillen

Community development's newest recruit

With a background in environmental studies, Kerrie Skillen never imagined herself developing a living wage campaign or leading learning initiatives that focus on poverty reduction.

But caring about the state of our planet also means caring about the people on it.

Kerrie was in Dalian, China completing research for her Masters thesis in Environmental Studies for the University of Waterloo when she saw a university posting



advertising a position for a Research Assistant in Waterloo Region.

The timing was perfect.

She was just wrapping up her research in China, on environmental management systems, and was looking for something fresh and different to do when she came home.

While with Opportunities Waterloo Region she researched and developed the report, "A Living Wage for Waterloo Region," helping to make the case for a living wage in the community.

It was her first experience with community development work and, she says, it was a huge education.

"I never realized that even in a wealthy economy like Waterloo Region, people didn't have access to opportunity - people could work 40 hours or more a week and still not have enough to support themselves. That didn't make sense to me."

Kerrie joined Tamarack last year after finishing her degree. As part of her work here she coordinates the Pan Canadian Learning Community for Vibrant Communities and provides support to Tamarack's Custom Services contracts and clients.

She loves the work.

"I really enjoy connecting with people from across the country, and hearing that they're supported, in some way, by the work we do here. I especially like it when they share with us how they've thought differently or grown in their own work because of learning we've generated together."

Does she regret not pursuing a career in the environmental sector?

Absolutely not.

"The work we do at Tamarack makes a difference. It matters," says Kerrie.
"And I help contribute to that."

Related Links:

- [Living Wage Learning Initiative](#)
- [Sustainable Incomes Learning Initiative](#)
- [Community Engagement study](#)

By: Louise Kearney