



Engage!

Creating a positive learning environment

Like many communities, the schools in Edmonton's downtown core face a number of challenges including declining enrolment and student achievement rates, families struggling with poverty, and an aging physical infrastructure.

The City Centre Education Project (CCEP) is a groundbreaking collaboration, launched in 2001, of seven inner city schools that have come together to create a positive learning environment.

School administrators collectively pool and manage their resources to offer enriched programming opportunities and improve student learning, making tough decisions about how to use scarce resources.

Across the city's often fragmented human service systems, schools and social service groups provide targeted support to families and children to help them get the most out of their education.

Today, CCEP 150 staff members serve approximately 1,700 students. Education outcomes have improved and the partners play host to people from all over North America interested in understanding how this innovation might play out in their own community.

On April 5, Colin Inglis, Coordinator of CCEP was the featured tele-learning speaker. [Learn more about this innovative collaborative model!](#)

Related Links:

- [Community education](#)
- [Strengthening Community Education: Building Partnerships Workbook](#)

By: Louise Kearney

Who do you trust?

The frustrating thing about collaboration, or any community enterprise, is the amount of time it takes to get going.

That's because it takes time to build trust - a critical ingredient for the success of community building.

Study after study shows that communities that demonstrate high levels of trust amongst citizens and organizations also perform better on indicators of economic, social and cultural vitality.

According to Robert Putnam, social trust, along with networks and norms, facilitates coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

Community building and collaboration take time because relationship building takes time - people need to work together, to understand each other's perspectives, to build trust through repetition and good experiences on simple things before moving on to more complex ones.

Too much work? Easier for people and organizations to do on their own?

Maybe so, but communities and organizations interested in building healthy collaborations will know that the pay off is well worth the investment of time and energy.

Related Links:

- [Using the Law of Reciprocity to Improve your Relationships](#)
- [Trust and Community](#)
- [Strength and Durability of Social Networks](#)

By: Kerrie Skillen

YES for Youth in Waterloo Region

Youth living in poverty often fail to complete high school. Without a diploma their job prospects are dim, perpetuating their low income status.

Looking for a solution to this problem Opportunities Waterloo Region initiated a project to bring together a new multisectoral collaborative working group to work on a demonstration project in the Mill-Courtland neighbourhood.

Mill-Courtland is an older suburban area in Kitchener. It is known for its ethnically diverse population and its community spirit. It also has high number of residents living in poverty (23%).

The working group, sponsored by the Catholic Family Counseling Centre, aims to harness the passion and commitment of local people and agencies to prevent poverty in the Mill-Courtland neighbourhood by giving today's youth the greatest opportunities for future success.

They'll do this through YES - Youth Education for Success, a coordinated and comprehensive service that includes mentoring, tutoring, emotional and financial supports. Funding for the two year planning phase was provided by the Trillium Foundation.

YES will focus on youth starting in grade 7 and, when it is launched in 2006, the program will support 100 youth annually by providing scholarships and educational incentives to complete post-secondary education.

Related Links:

- [Opportunities Waterloo Region](#)
- [Regent Park's Pathways to Education Program](#)

By: David Pell & Mary MacKeigan

Tamarack upgrades again!

The long running joke about the two seasons in Ontario (winter and construction) could well apply to website development.

Only a year after launching the upgraded Tamarack website, we're making more improvements.

The Tamarack website attracts thousands of visitors each month and we are always on the lookout for ways to make your experience here more useful and dynamic.

In the coming months you'll see new and improved features at www.tamarackcommunity.ca including:

- Easier registration process
- Ability to register for more than one e-newsletter online
- Online seminars
- Access to previously restricted material
- New ways to access ongoing work at Tamarack
- And more!

These changes will be rolled out over the coming weeks and months and should not disrupt your online experience.

In the meantime, if you have suggestions for improvements to the website, or ideas on content you'd like to see here, please [email us](#) and let us know.

We'll keep you updated as we grow!

By: Louise Kearney

The Incredible Incredibles

If you see The Incredibles lingering on your local video store's shelves, grab it quick before someone else picks it up. This fun film is sure to entertain.

Bob Parr used to be Mr. Incredible. Now he ekes out a normal (read: boring) existence in the suburbs with his wife, Helen, (formerly Elastigirl) and children, Violet, Dash and Jack Jack.

When Mr. Incredible is called back into action, he leaps at the chance to play a superhero again. Soon, the whole family is involved and it's up to the Incredibles to save the world. To do that, they have to rely on each other.



The Incredibles isn't a typical Pixar movie. While it's fun and fantastic, it feels more relevant somehow, likely because the characters are "human". This is a great film for families to watch together – kids will love the exuberance of Dash and the action sequences, while parents will enjoy the relationship between Bob and Helen.

An overarching theme in the movie is how society treats those who are different in some way. Societal norms and acceptable modes of conduct play heavily in the family's life. The movie follows their journey as they begin to recognize and value the unique strengths and talents each bring to the family.

The Incredibles encourage movie audiences to embrace their own superpower - to be themselves – and that’s a great lesson to learn, at any age.

 [reviews from Tamarack](#)

Related Links:

- [The Incredibles website](#)
- [Movie Mom’s Review](#)

By: Louise Kearney