



View Engage online at: <http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/newsletter/engage.htm>!

Engage!

Developing Responsive Communities

Loren Grebanier uses his passion for capacity building to advocate adaptive learning for organizational strength.

As Policy Development Officer for the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division in Toronto, Loren helps increase the capacity of organizations to improve their performance and impact on the communities they serve.



Loren began his work in community engagement by focusing on changing the social conditions in which people lived. "Conditions need to be responsive to people's needs," said Loren.

In his current role, Loren provides support to organizations to do just that, as he uses adaptive learning techniques to build on their capacity and knowledge. Loren facilitates this sort of organization development through several initiatives, including a partnership with the United Way of Greater Toronto.

As a participant of the Communities Collaborating Institute, Loren looks forward to working alongside others to develop a common language, which will help reaffirm and deconstruct his knowledge of collaboration.

 For more on the City of Toronto: Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division, [click here](#).

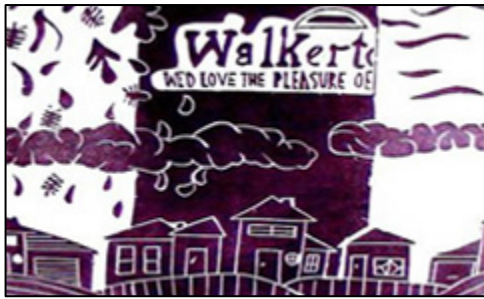
Related Links:

- [The Communities Collaborating Institute](#)
- [City of Toronto: Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative](#)

By: Rachel Veira-Gainer

Healthy Water, Strong Voices *Strength through Art in Walkerton*

When the water supply of Walkerton, Ontario was contaminated with E. Coli in 2000, a collaborative effort grew out of the tragedy, helping to heal the community through the arts.



The Walkerton Water Stories Project, spearheaded by a group of artists and storytellers, aimed to give a global voice to their troubled community through a collaborative oral and visual history initiative.

In Spring 2002, the project offered printmaking workshops to high school students and the general public. School children collected stories about the crisis; and residents were interviewed on their experience. The initiative produced a symphony of results – an exhibit of prints, a storytelling performance and a gala.

Project participants looked beyond the pain and illness experienced from the E. Coli contamination to the town's 150-year relationship with the Saugeen River. Their goal was to find health and well-being in the aftermath of disaster – and they found it.

The art now has a home at the Walkerton Clean Water Centre where water managers from around the globe are trained.



[Read stories from the Project here.](#)

Related Links:

- [Project Coordinator, Susan Scott, writes about the Walkerton Initiative.](#)

By: Anne Blayney

Expanding our Reach

Abbotsford Joins Vibrant Communities

We are pleased to welcome Vibrant Abbotsford as the newest member of the Pan-Canadian Learning Community!

Convened by the United Way of the Fraser Valley, Vibrant Abbotsford began by recognizing that community mobilizers are participating in many of the same events, are passionate about similar issues, and are already working together, informally, on a variety of projects and initiatives.

More and more, groups in Abbotsford are embracing the benefits of information sharing, learning together, and engaging in collaborative efforts.

Vibrant Abbotsford firmly believes that engaging the community and working collaboratively on comprehensive, systematic solutions are necessary to poverty reduction. Acknowledging that there is still much to learn, they believe they can make positive, measurable and sustainable impacts on poverty for all Abbotsford citizens.

We are thrilled to have Abbotsford as a member of Vibrant Communities, and look forward to learning more from and with our partners there in the months ahead.



[Vibrant Communities Abbotsford](#)

Related Links:

- [United Way of the Fraser Valley](#)
- [Abbotsford Cares: Agenda for Social Planning](#)

By: Stacey Corriveau and Susan Eckerle Curwood

Vibrant Communities Update

Waterloo Region, ON – Opportunities Waterloo Region’s next Community Conversation will be Tuesday, September 26. Dr. Troy Glover and Dr. Gina Browne will discuss the benefits of youth recreation and how to ensure that all youth in Waterloo Region have access to quality recreation opportunities. Get more information or register by emailing info@owr.ca.

Saint John, NB – The City of Saint John is conducting an online survey to allow citizens to register their opinions on water and sewer services and rates. The survey includes a number of questions relating to affordability, ability to pay and subsidization. To take part in the survey, click [here](#).

BC’s Capital Region –West Corporation, which employs over 1,000 people, took the Employer CHALLENGE and raised starting wages from \$10 to \$12 per hour. Learn more about how the Quality of Life CHALLENGE is making a difference [here](#).

Beautiful Thinking

The voluntary sector has been growing rapidly over the past few decades. Today, there are many charities making an impact by using innovative and exciting new approaches.

The challenge facing these organizations is two-fold: they must accomplish their mission while disseminating their knowledge so others can implement these successful initiatives in their own communities.

However, with literally thousands of charities across the country, even the loudest cries can sound like a faint whisper lost in the crowd. Tamarack’s monthly newsletter, *Eunoia*, was designed to address this challenge.

Eunoia is Greek for “beautiful thinking” and showcases some of the latest stories, articles and tools on community engagement topics. Thanks to *Eunoia*’s categorized fields of interest, subscribers are kept up-to-date and can target their learning to the topics that influence their work and lives.

If you are looking to stay on the leading edge of community engagement theory and practice, consider joining the thousands of people who receive *Eunoia* monthly.



To subscribe to *Eunoia*, [click here](#).

Related Links:

- [To read the latest issue of *Eunoia*, click here.](#)

By: Matt Gordon

Discover Faith

Since launching a special section in *Community Life* called "Engaging Faith Communities," we have learned a great deal more about the importance of faith communities and religious-based organizations.

Engaging in and across faiths plays an important role in building community, and addressing social and systemic issues. Simply being part of a faith community can be both personally and publicly beneficial.

More and more, we need to learn what motivates people and what aspects of faith we have in common in order to build strong stronger communities.

So, we asked faith leaders in our community to share how their religious organizations discuss issues and decide on actions for the well-being of the community. The dialogue and responses we received from the faith leaders are as diverse as the faiths of the writers.

It is our hope that you will enjoy learning more about these religions to engage in and across different faiths.



Learn more about the faiths in your community [here](#).

Related Links:

- [Engaging Faith Communities](#)
- [The Importance of Working with Faith Communities](#)
- [Establish an Interfaith Dialogue in Your Community](#)

By: Rachel Veira-Gainer

Featured Resources

From Poverty, Opportunity: Putting the Market to Work for Lower Income Families - This report from the Brookings Institution examines 12 major metropolitan areas and the higher prices facing lower income families. The report also looks at policies and strategies that can help low-income families get ahead by bringing down the inflated prices they pay for basic necessities, such as food and housing. Learn more [here](#). [Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation's Family Economic Success Quarterly Newsletter]

Asset-based, Resident-led Neighbourhood Development - This paper presents insights derived from Action for Neighbourhood Change's (ANC) first 14 months of operation. It highlights the asset-based, resident-led approach pursued on the ground in the five participating neighbourhoods. It also considers the roles that government and voluntary sector partners at the national level can play in support of such initiatives. Download this paper [here](#). [Source: Caledon Institute of Social Policy]